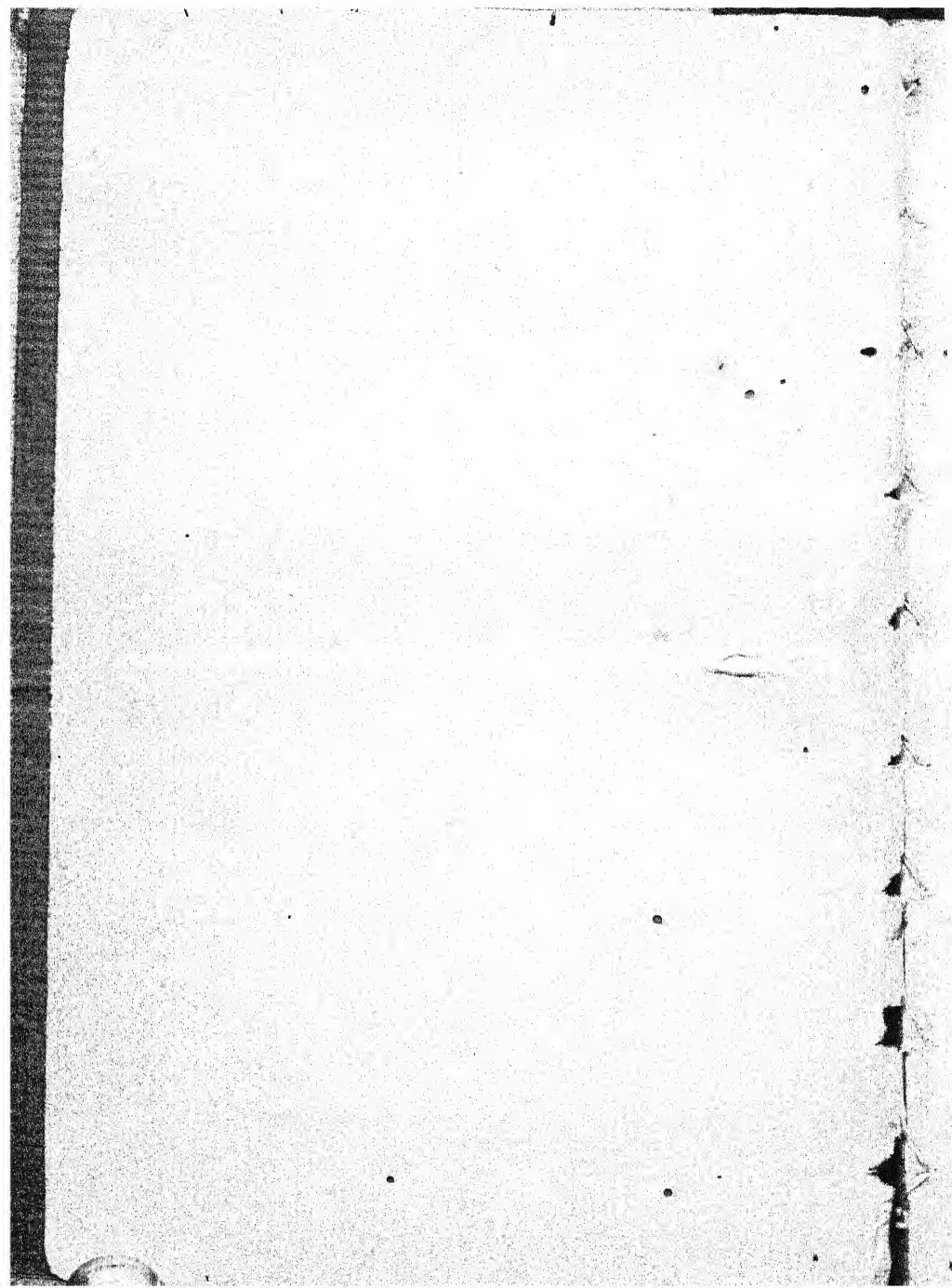


THE PRINCE OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID

Or, Three Years in the
Holy City

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THE
PRINCE OF THE HOUSE OF DAVID.

INTRODUCTION.

ADINA, the supposed writer of the following letters, is the only child of Manasseh Benjamin, who, though an Israelite of the tribe of Judah, was a native of the Græco-Roman city of Alexandria. His ancestor was the learned David Esdras Manasseh, one of the Septuaginta (or LXX.) appointed by Ptolemy Philadelphus, in the year B.C. 277, to translate the Bible from the original Hebrew tongue into the Greek. Esdras, with his companions, having accomplished this important work, was invited by the king to remain in Egypt, where he died at an advanced age, holding an office of trust and honour. His descendants for five generations were eminent men, and enjoyed the confidence of the rulers of Egypt, under whom they accumulated riches which were finally inherited by Manasseh Benjamin, a man not unworthy of his eminent ancestry. He was revered in Alexandria for his integrity, wisdom, and rank, as well as for his learning and wealth, and was honoured with the friendship of the Roman Proconsul, Rufus Lucius Paulinus. His love and veneration for the land of his fathers, and for the Holy City and Temple of Jehovah, were not lessened by the fact of his being an Egyptian Jew;

and as he had been sent to Jerusalem in his youth by his father, to be educated in the laws of Moses, he resolved that his daughter should have the same privileges, and be taught as beseemed a Jewish woman and the inheritress of his name and wealth.

After a tedious journey of seventeen days by way of Gaza, the lovely Adina at length came suddenly in sight of the walls and towers of the city of Zion. The caravan halted upon the ridge, and the Jewish travellers alighted, and prostrated themselves in adoration before the city of David and the mountain of Moriah, made sacred by the footsteps of Abraham. The maiden unveiled, and bowed her head with sacred awe. It was her first sight of Jerusalem, the city of her people, the birth-place of her father—the place of which, from her earliest childhood, she had heard him speak with the profoundest reverence. As she gazed upon it she thought of Isaac, who had been bound upon an altar on yonder height, now glittering with walls overlaid with marble and gold; of Isaiah, who had been sawn asunder in the gloomy valley at her feet; of David and his glory; of Solomon and his wisdom; of the host of prophets who had trodden its streets or wandered upon its hills. Rapidly her memory recalled the history of the mighty past; of the sieges the city had withstood against the Assyrians, the Persians, the Egyptians, and other nations of the earth; of the carrying away of her countrymen into captivity; of the demolition of its walls and of its Temple; and its rebuilding by Ezra. But most of all she remembered with holy fear that the presence of Jehovah had dwelt there century after century, visibly, in the form of celestial fire, within the inner sanctuary of the Temple, and that there He had spoken with man as it were face to face. She thought

also of the Ark of the Covenant, of the tables of stone, of Aaron's budding rod, and of the brazen serpent, laid up in the Temple; and her heart beat with emotion such as she had never felt before. Lower and with more awful veneration she bent her head, in grateful reverence to Him who had above all nations distinguished her nation, above all cities the city of her fathers and of the prophets. Then she raised her eyes in pride that she was a Jewess, and looked round exultingly upon the noble landscape, which, as her imagination deemed, must be as familiar to the eyes of angels as to those of men, so closely had Heaven connected itself with that chosen spot.

The Arabs, her attendants, had also bowed the forehead and the knee in the presence of the sacred towers; but it was in honour of Abraham and the patriarchs their ancestors through Ishmael, who they ignorantly believed lay with Isaac and Jacob in sepulchres upon Mount Moriah, instead of "at Hebron in the burial-place of the cave of Machpelah," as saith Moses the prophet.

Adina's proud glance was arrested by the sight of a cohort of soldiers, who came galloping up the ridge from the city, with a glittering eagle carried in advance.

"The Romani! the Romani!" cried the guides; and rising from their knees, they remounted in haste, and used every exertion to leave the road open to the approaching troop of horse. A few rods below in the path, an Israelitish muleteer, who could not get out of the way soon enough, was run over and thrown to the ground; and, disregarding his cries, the cavalcade swept onward to the summit of the hill.

The cheek of Adina paled at this sight, but it was not from fear. All her pride died away in her heart, and she forgot the glory of the past in the sense of present degradation. In the

first exultation of her emotions on beholding Jerusalem, she had forgotten that the land of the prophets and of kings anointed by God was now a conquered Roman province ; but the sight of the Roman cohort brought this painful reality to her mind, and, veiling her face, she stood overcome by the deepest sadness.

The troops passed her and her escort like a whirlwind of war, with ringing spurs, jingling bits, clashing shields, and the noise of the tramp of five hundred hoofs. She could no longer gaze upon the city with joy and pride.

The words of Jeremiah rose to her lips :

“How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in His anger ! Is this the city that men call the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth ? The Lord hath cast us off from being a nation, and the name of Israel is remembered no more !”

Tears, free and bountiful, relieved the fulness of her heart, and like a true daughter of Jerusalem she mourned over the departed glory of her people.

Once more they rode on, winding down round a hill covered with tombs, one of which was pointed out to her by a Jewish Rabbi, under whose care she was journeying, as that of the prophet Jeremiah. Leaving this tomb, they crossed a small valley, green and beautiful with groves, fountains, and terraces, and thronged by a mixed multitude of men and women, who seemed to be enjoying a promenade there, outside the city walls ; there were also booths arranged on one side of the shady walk, where merchants from all parts of the earth were selling their goods. The Rabbi accounted for this concourse by informing Adina that they had arrived at Jerusalem on a great feast-day. Avoiding this multitude, the travellers

moved on their way to the right, and ascended a low eminence, from which Jerusalem, in another point of view, burst close upon them in all the splendour of its yet unspoiled magnificence ; for in spite of all it had suffered in wars, sieges, and plunderings, the Jerusalem of the Romans was still a majestic metropolis, and in a great degree merited its appellation of the "Queen of the nations."

"How beautiful !" exclaimed Adina.

"Man cannot destroy the city of God," said the Rabbi, with haughty confidence. "She will stand for ever."

"Point out to me the prominent places, good Rabbi Ben Israel. What is that frowning castle, beyond the Temple, which looks so strong and warlike ?"

"That is the City of David, the castle of the kings ! It protects the Temple and town. David fortified himself in it, and so did the noble Maccabees. It was built by Melchizedek, the first King of Jerusalem and the friend of our father Abraham. It is now garrisoned by a thousand Roman soldiers."

The Jewish girl sighed, and as a graceful tower which the sunbeams of the west burnished like gold attracted her eyes, she inquired what it was.

"The tower with the palm growing by its side, and nearly as lofty ?" asked the Rabbi, who seemed to take pleasure in gratifying the curiosity of his lovely charge

"Yes, the same."

"That is called David's Tower. Upon yonder wall above the gate, David's watchman stood when he was looking for tidings from Absalom ; and a wood not visible hence, far to the north and east, is the Wood of Ephraim, wherein, they say, Prince Absalom was slain."

"And what palace is that which the setting sun lights up so brilliantly, making it glow as if it were covered with plates of silver?"

"That is the palace of the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, who reigns in Jerusalem as a king. But why do you shudder?" he asked, as he beheld her change countenance; and following the direction of her eyes to the right, he beheld, not far distant, a score of crosses bristling upon a small eminence opposite the city gate. Two of the crosses held bodies recently nailed to them, while a guard of soldiers and a crowd of people stood near, looking on and watching the writhing of the victims. The groans and execrations of one of them distinctly reached the ears of Adina.

"That is the place of Calvary, daughter," said the Rabbi, with a look of indifference. "It is where the Romans execute their malefactors. Two have suffered to-day. It is a cruel punishment—more cruel than stoning to death; but the Romans have little pity. Let us ride on."

On the left they wound round the wall of a garden that seemed to be open to the people, as in some places the enclosure was thrown down. Several persons were seen within, walking up and down, or reclining under the shade of the trees.

"That is Solomon's garden, now called Gethsemane," said the Rabbi: "now, like all the royal woods, it is desolate."

"Yet beautiful in its desolation. How majestically the walls of the Temple rise heavenward, seen from this valley! And what noble hill is this, partly covered with trees, that rises east of the garden?"

"This is Olivet, also a portion of the king's gardens in the days of Israel's glory. Beyond it is Bethany."

"Where is the Bethlehem of Judah out of which the prophet says shall come a ruler over Israel?"

"To the south : and we look to have that prophecy one day fulfilled. It cheers us with the assurance that Jerusalem shall not for ever be trodden down of the nations, but shall have a king and governor of the royal seed of David."

"And do any of the family of David now exist?" asked Adina, fixing her eyes earnestly upon the bearded face of the Rabbi.

"Yes, or the prophecy could not be accomplished ; but those who are known are poor and humble ; yet I have no doubt that among the nations in some part of the world exist some of the sacred stock who are reigning princes, as Daniel and Joseph reigned in Persia and Egypt, from whence they shall come as conquerors to rule over Israel."

"How then can they spring from the little village of Bethlehem?" asked the maiden.

The Rabbi looked somewhat embarrassed, and was about to make a reply to this difficult question, when the road was blocked up by a flock of sheep, mingled with a herd of cattle, being driven into the city for the altars of sacrifice. It was with some difficulty that they made their way through these obstacles and came to the Gate of Damascus. Here they were detained by the Roman guard, and obliged to show their passes, and to pay thirty sesterces for every camel in the caravan, and half as many for each mule.

The scene in the streets was quite bewildering to Adina, who had been journeying so many days through a desert ; but as the dwelling of the relations of her father was near the gate, she was soon in the arms of her friends, who, though they had never seen her before, received her affectionately, as

much for her father's sake, who had commended her to their protection, as for her own loveliness.

Just entering her seventeenth year, the daughter of the rich Alexandrian was in the prime of female charms. Her hair was auburn-brown, and shone like gold ; her face oval, and transparently olive in its colour, tinted with a slight roseate hue ; her large eyes beamed with the most splendid light and glory of brightness ; her nose was straight and finely outlined ; and her mouth exquisitely shaped, with an expression of heavenly sweetness.

Having been kindly welcomed, and finding every preparation made for her comfort and happiness, she gave a few days to repose ; and then, on the return of the caravan, addressed the following letter to her father. This letter was the first of a considerable number, all of which it is our intention to give to the reader, as they are written at the most interesting period which history records. The first letter is dated, according to the Jewish chronology, three years before the crucifixion of our Saviour.

Letters from Adina.

LETTER I.

MY DEAR FATHER,

My first duty and my highest pleasure is to obey your command to write you as soon as I should arrive at Jerusalem ; and this letter, while it conveys to you intelligence of my arrival, will confirm to you my filial obedience.

I will not fail to write by every monthly caravan that leaves here for Cairo ; and if there are more frequent opportunities, my love, dear father, and sympathy for you in your separation from me will prompt me to avail myself of them.

My journey hither occupied many days ; Rabbi Ben Israel says seventeen, but although I kept the number up to ten, I soon became too weary to keep the account. When we travelled in sight of the sea, which we did for three days, I enjoyed the majesty of the prospect—it seemed so like the sky stretched out upon the earth. I also had the good fortune to see several ships, which the Rabbi, who was always ready to gratify my thirst for information, informed me were Roman galleys, some bound to Sidon, and others to the Nile ; and after one of these latter, as it was going to you, I sent a prayer and a wish. Just as we were leaving the sea-shore to turn off into the desert, I saw a wrecked vessel. It looked so helpless and bulky, with its huge black body all out of the water, that it seemed to me like a great sea-monster, stranded and dying, and I could not help pitying it. The Rabbi gave me to understand that it had come from Alexandria, laden with wheat, bound for Italia, and been cast ashore in a storm. How terrible a tempest must be upon the sea ! I was in hopes to have seen a leviathan, but was not gratified in the wish. The good Rabbi, who seemed to know all about these things, told me that they seldom appear now in the Middle Sea, but are seen beyond the Pillars of Hercules, at the world's end.

At Gaza we stopped two days. We entered the gateway of which Samson carried away the gates, and I saw the traditional hill, two miles to the south-east, where he left them. Many other places of interest were shown me, especially the field, which our path led across, where he put to flight the Philistine hosts with much slaughter. A cave was also pointed out to me whence came the lion which Samson slew, and respecting which he made his famous riddle.

A dry well into which the ten patriarchs lowered the Prince Joseph, their brother, was also shown me by our Arab guide, and also the rock on which the Ishmaelites told down the pieces of silver. But Rabbi Ben Israel says the true pit of Joseph is north of Jerusalem, near the mountains

of Gilboa at Dothan. The traditions of the Arabs are often thus at fault. I fancied the old Arab related the occurrence with more elation than was needful, as if he took pride in perpetuating the fact that our noble ancestor had once been the purchased slave of theirs. I noticed several times during the journey that the Ishmaelites of Edom in our caravan took every occasion to elevate their own race to the disparagement of the sons of Israel ; indeed, Aben Hussuff, our white-bearded chief of the caravan, in a wordy discussion with Rabbi Ben Israel, at Isaac's Well, where we encamped, would have it that Isaac was the son of the bondwoman, and Ishmael the true heir, but disinherited and cast out through the wiles of the bondwoman, who would have her own son the inheritor. But I was too well instructed in the history of my fathers to give heed to such a fable ; though the Arabs all took part with their chief, and contended for the truth of what he asserted as warmly and zealously as the learned Rabbi maintained the truth of his own view.

The morning of the last day but one of our journey, having lost our way and wandered eastward many hours, we caught sight of the Sea of Sodom and Gomorrah, at a great distance to the east. How my pulse quickened at beholding that fearful spot, marked by the wrath of Jehovah ! I seemed to see in imagination the heavens on fire above it, and the flames and smoke ascending as from a great furnace, as on that fearful day when those cities were destroyed, with all that beautiful surrounding plain, which, we are told, was one vast garden of beauty. How calm and still now lay that sluggish sea beneath a cloudless sky ! We held it in sight many hours, and once caught a glimpse of the Jordan north of it, looking like a silver thread ; yet, near as it appeared to be, I was told it was a good day's journey for a camel to reach its shores.

After we had lost sight of this melancholy lake, the glassy sepulchre of cities and their countless inhabitants, our way

lay along a narrow valley for some time, and the next day, on reaching an eminence, we beheld Jerusalem. It appeared like a city risen out of the earth, it stood before us so unexpectedly ; for we were still, as it were, in the desert ; yet so near on the side of our approach does the desert advance to the city walls, that Jerusalem was not two miles off when we first beheld it.

I cannot, my dear father, describe to you my emotions on beholding the Holy City ! They have been experienced by millions of our people—they were similar to your own, as you related them to me. All the past, with its mighty men who walked with Jehovah, came up to my mind, overpowering me with the amazing weight. The whole history of the sacred place rushed to my memory, and compelled me to bow my head and worship and adore at the sight of the Temple, where God once (alas ! why does He no longer visit earth and His holy house ?) dwelt in the flaming Shekinah, and made known the oracles of His will. I could see the smoke of the evening sacrifice ascending to the skies, and I inwardly prayed Jehovah to accept it for thee and me.

As we approached the city, several interesting spots were pointed out to me, and I was bewildered with the familiar and sacred localities which I had known hitherto only by reverential reading of the prophets. It seemed to me that I was living in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah, as places associated with their names were shown me, rather than in the generation to which I belong. Indeed, I have lived only in the past the three days I have been in Jerusalem, constantly, with a holy awe and inward delight that must be felt to be understood, consulting the sacred historians, to compare places and scenes with their accounts, and so verify each. But, dear father, you have yourself experienced all this, and therefore can understand my emotions.

We entered the city just before the sixth hour of the evening, and were soon at the house of our relative, Amos the

Levite. I was received as if I had a daughter's claim to my kinsfolk's embraces; and with the luxuries with which they surrounded me in my gorgeously furnished apartments, I am sure my kinsfolk here mean to tempt me to forget the joys of the dear home I have left.

The Rabbi Amos and his family all desire to be commended to you. As it is his course to serve in the Temple, I do not see much of him, but he seems to be a man of piety and benevolence, and greatly loves his children. I have been once to the Temple. Its outer court seemed like a vast caravanserai or market-place, being thronged with the men who sell animals for sacrifice. Thousands of doves in large cages were for sale on one side, and on another were stalls for lambs, sheep, calves, and oxen, the noise and bleating of which, with the confusion of tongues, made the place appear like anything else than the Temple of Jehovah. It appears like desecration to use the Temple thus, dear father, and seems to show a want of that holy awe of God's house that once characterised our ancestors. I was glad to get safely through the bazaar, which, on the plea of selling to sacrificers victims for the altar, allows every other sort of traffic. On reaching the Women's Court, I was sensible of being in the Temple by the magnificence which surrounded me. With what awe I bowed my head in the direction of the Holy of Holies! I never before felt so near to God! Clouds of incense floated above the heads of the multitude, and rivers of blood flowed down the marble steps of the altar of burnt offering. Alas! how many innocent victims bleed every morning and evening for the sins of Israel! What a sea of blood has been poured out in ages that have passed! What a strange, fearful mystery, that the blood of an innocent lamb should atone for sins that I have done! There must be some deeper meaning, yet unrevealed to us, in these sacrifices, dear father.

As I was returning from the Temple, I met many people

walking and riding, who seemed to be crowding out of the gate on some unusual errand. I have since learned that there is a very extraordinary man—a true prophet of God it is believed by many—who dwells in the wilderness eastward near Jordan, and who preaches with power unknown in the land since the days of Elijah and Elisha. It is to see and listen to this prophet that so many persons are daily going out from Jerusalem. He lives in a cave, feeds on plants or wild honey, and drinks only water; his clothing is the skin of a lion; at least, such is the report. I hope he is a true prophet of Heaven, and that God is once more about to remember Israel; but the days of the prophets have long since passed away, and I fear this man is only an enthusiast, like the impostor Theudas, or that Galilean Judas who deceived our people, and perished so miserably; but this man's influence over all who listen to him is so remarkable, that it would seem, and I have almost the courage to believe, that he is really endowed with the spirit of the prophets.

Farewell, dear father, and let us ever pray for the glory of Israel.

Your affectionate

ADINA.

LETTER II.

MY DEAR FATHER,

The excellent Rabbi Ben Israel has just made known to me his intention of returning to Egypt to-morrow, and has waited upon me to inquire if I had any message to entrust him with for my friends in Alexandria. Instead of this letter, of which he will be the bearer to you, I would rather commit myself a second time to his care, and let him, instead of

placing this parchment in your hand, lay your child again upon your bosom. But it is by your wish, dear father, that I am here; and though I sigh to behold you once more, I will try to be contented in my absence from you, knowing that my discontent would cause sorrow to bow down your grey hairs.

So far as a daughter can be happy away from the home of her youth, I have everything to render me so. The good Rabbi Amos, in his kindness, recalls your own mild and dignified countenance, and Rebecca, his noble wife, my cousin, is truly a mother in Israel. Her daughter Mary, my younger cousin, in her affectionate attachment to me shows me how much love I have lost in never having had a sister. It is altogether a lovely household, and I am favoured by the God of our fathers that my lot, during my exile from my home on the banks of the beautiful Nile, is cast in so holy and peaceful a domestic sanctuary.

The street in which we dwell is elevated, and the roof of the house, where I love to walk in the evening, watching the stars that hang over Egypt, commands a wide prospect of the Holy City. The stupendous Temple is ever in full sight, with its terraces of dazzling marble piled on terraces, its glittering fountains shooting upward like palm trees of liquid silver, and its massive yet beautiful walls and towers. The golden arc which spans the door that leads into the Holy of Holies burns with an unearthly glory, as it catches the sunbeams of morning, like a celestial coronet. I dare not gaze steadily upon that holy place, nor imagine the blinding splendour of the visible presence of Jehovah once present there in the Shekinah.

Yesterday morning I was early on the house-top, to behold the first cloud of the day-dawn sacrifice rise from the bosom of the Temple. When I had turned my gaze towards the sacred summit, I was awed by the profound silence which reigned over the vast pile that crowned Mount Moriah. The

sun was not yet risen, but the east blushed with a roseate purple, and the morning star was melting into its depths. Not a sound broke the stillness of the hundred streets within the walls of Jerusalem. Night and silence still held united empire over the city and the altar of God. I was awestruck. I stood with my hands crossed upon my bosom and my head reverently bowed, for in the absence of man and his voice I believed angels were all around in heavenly hosts,—the guardian armies of this wondrous City of David. Lances of light now shot upward and across the purple sea in the east, and fleeces of clouds, that reposed on it like barks, catching the red rays of the yet unrisen sun, blazed like burning ships. Each moment, as the darkness fled, the splendour of the dawn increased; and when I expected to see the sun appear over the battlemented heights of Mount Moriah, I was thrilled by the startling peal of the trumpets of the priests: a thousand silver trumpets, blown at once from the walls of the Temple, shook the very foundations of the city with their mighty voice. Instantly the house-tops around were alive with worshippers! Jerusalem started, as one man, from its slumbers, and, with their faces towards the Temple, a hundred thousand of the children of Israel stood waiting. A second trumpet-peal, clear and musical as the voice of God when He spake to our father Moses in Horeb, caused every knee to bend and every tongue to join in the morning song of praise. The murmur of voices was like the continuous roll of the surge upon the beach, and the walls of the lofty Temple echoed it back as a cliff throws back the sound of the murmuring waves. Unused to such a scene—for we have nothing like this majesty of worship in Alexandria—I stood rather as a spectator than a sharer, as thy daughter should have been, dear father. Simultaneously with the surging swell of the adoring hymn, I beheld a pillar of black smoke ascend from the midst of the Temple, and spread itself above the court like a canopy. It was accompanied

by a blue wreath of lighter and more misty appearance, which threaded its way in and out, and twined about the other like a silvery strand woven into a sable cord. This was the smoke of the incense which accompanied the burnt sacrifice. I beheld it rise higher and higher, and finally overtop the heavy cloud, which was instantly enlarged by volumes of dense smoke, that rolled upward from the consuming victim, and slowly disappeared, melting into heaven; then I also knelt, remembering that on the wings of the incense went up the prayers of the people; and ere it dissolved wholly I entrusted to it, dear father, prayers for thee and me!

How wonderful is our religion! How mysterious this daily sacrifice, offered up throughout so many hundreds of years for the sins of our fathers and our own! How, I have often asked myself since I have been here, how can the blood of an heifer, of a lamb, or of a goat, take away sin? What is the mysterious relation existing between us and these dumb and innocent creatures? How can a lamb stand for a man before God? The more I reflect upon this awful subject, the more I am lost in wonder. I have spoken to Rabbi Amos of these things; but he only smiles, and bids me think of my embroidery; for my cousin Mary and I are working a rich gold border for the phylactery of his next New-Year's garment.

The evening sacrifice, which I witnessed yesterday, is, if possible, more imposing than that of the morning. Just as the sun dips beyond the hill of Gibeah, overhanging the valley of Ajalon, there is heard a prolonged note of a trumpet, from one of the western watch-towers of Zion. Its mellow tones reach the farthest ear within the gates of the city. All labour at once ceases. Every man drops the instrument of his toil, and raises his face towards the summit of the house of God. A deep pause succeeds, as if all held their breath in expectation. Suddenly the very skies seem to be riven and shaken with the thunder of the company of trumpeters, that rolls, wave on wave of sound, from the battlements of the Temple.

The dark cloud of sacrifice ascends in solemn grandeur, and sometimes, heavier than the evening air, falls like a descending curtain around the mount, till the whole is veiled from sight; but above it is seen to soar the purer incense to the invisible Jehovah, followed by a myriad eyes, and the utterance of a nation's prayers. As the daylight faded, the light of the altar blazed high and beacon-like over the lofty walls of the outer court of the Temple, and lent a wild sublimity to the towers and pinnacles that crown Moriah.

There was, however, my dear father, one thing last evening which painfully marred the holy character of the sacred hour. When the blast of the silver trumpets of the Levites had ceased, and while all hearts and eyes were ascending to Jehovah with the mounting wreaths of incense, there came from the Roman castle adjoining the City of David a loud martial clangour of brazen bugles, and other barbarian instruments of music, while a smoke like that from the altar of sacrifice rose from the height of David's fortified hill. I was told that it was the Romans engaged in the worship of their idol god Jupiter! Oh, when—when shall the holy city be freed from the reproach of the stranger? Alas for Israel! her inheritance "is turned to strangers, and her houses to aliens." Well said Jeremiah the prophet, "The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered into the gates of Jerusalem." How truly now are the prophecies fulfilled which are to be found in the Lamentations: "The Lord hath cast off His altar, He hath given up into the hands of the enemy the walls of her palaces: they *have made a noise* in the house of the Lord as in the day of a solemn feast." For these things I weep, my dear father; even now, while I write, my tears drop on the parchment. Why is it so? Why does Jehovah suffer the adversaries to dwell within His holy walls, and the smoke of their abominable sacrifices to mingle with that of the offerings of the

consecrated priests of the Most High? Surely Israel has sinned, and we are punished for our transgressions. It becomes the land "to search and try its ways, and turn unto God," if perhaps He will have mercy and restore the glory of Israel. Our kings are the servants of the Gentiles; our laws are no more; our prophets no longer see visions. God has gone up in anger, and no longer holds discourse with His chosen people. The very smoke of the daily sacrifice seems to hang above the Temple like a cloud of Jehovah's wrath.

Nearly three hundred years have passed since we have had a prophet—the youthful but divine Malachi. Since his day, Rabbi Amos confesses that Jehovah has ceased from all known intercourse with His people and holy house; nor has He made any sign of having heard the prayers or heeded the sacrifices that have been offered to Him in his time. I inquired of the intelligent Rabbi whether it would always be thus. He replied that when Shiloh came there would be a restoration of all things—that the glory of Jerusalem would then fill the whole earth with the splendour of the sun, and that all nations should come up from the ends of the world to worship in the Temple. He acknowledged that we are now under a cloud for our sins, but that a brighter day is coming, when Zion shall be the joy of the whole earth.

My conversation with Rabbi Amos, dear father,—a conversation which grew out of the subject of the Roman garrison occupying the citadel of David, and offering their pagan sacrifices by the side of our own smoking altars,—led me to examine the book of the prophet Malachi; and I find that, after plainly alluding to our present shame, and reproaching the priests for "causing the people to stumble," and thus making themselves "contemptible and base before all nations," he thus prophesies: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His Temple, and He shall sit as a REFINER and PURIFIER of silver; and He shall

PURIFY the sons of Levi, and PURGE them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. Behold," adds the divine seer, "I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord."

These words I read to-day to Rabbi Amos; indeed, I was reading them when Rabbi Ben Israel came in to say that he intended to depart on the morrow. The excellent Amos looked grave—graver than I had ever before seen him look. I feared I had offended him with my boldness, and approaching him, was about to embrace him, when I saw tears were sparkling in his eyes. This discovery deeply affected me, you may be assured, dear father; and, more troubled to have grieved than if I had displeased him, I was about to ask his forgiveness for intruding these sacred subjects upon his notice, when he took my hand, and smiling, while a tear-drop trickled down his snow-white beard, he said—

"Thou hast done no wrong, child: sit down beside me, and be at peace with thyself. It is too true, in this day, what the prophet Malachi writeth, Ben Israel," he continued sadly, turning to the Alexandrian Rabbi: "the priests of the Temple have indeed become corrupt, save a few here and there. It must have been this day at which the prophet aimed his words. Except in the outward form, I fear, the great body of our Levites have little more true religion and just knowledge of the one God Jehovah than the priests of the Roman idolatry. Alas! I fear God regards our sacrifices with no more favour than He bestows on theirs. To-day, while I was in the Temple, serving at the altar with the priests, these words of Isaiah came into my thoughts, and would not be put aside: 'To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offering of rams and the fat of fed beasts, and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. Bring no more vain oblations: incense is an abomination unto me; I

am weary to bear them. Yea, when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you ; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear : your hands are full of blood. Wash you ; make you clean. Cease to do evil ; learn to do well.'

"These terrible words of the prophet," added Rabbi Amos, still addressing the amazed Ben Israel, "went not out of my mind while I was in the Temple : they seemed to be thundered in my ears by a voice from heaven. Several of the younger priests, whose levity during the sacrifice had been reproved by me, seeing me sad, asked the cause. In reply, I repeated, in a voice that seemed to myself to be inspired, the words of the prophet. They turned pale and trembled, and thus I left them."

"I have noticed," said Ben Israel, "that there is now less reverence in the Temple than when I was a young man in Jerusalem ; but I find that the magnificence of the ceremonies is greatly increased."

"Yes," responded Ben Amos, with a look of sorrow ; "yes, as the soul of piety dies out from within, they gild the outside. The increased richness of the worship is copied from the Roman : so low are we fallen ! Our worship, with all its gorgeousness, is as a sepulchre whitewashed to conceal the corruption within."

You may be sure, my dear father, that this confession, from such a source, deeply humbled me. If, then, we are not worshipping God, what do we worship ? If Jehovah of Hosts, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, hides His face from our sacrifices and is weary of our incense, whom does Israel worship ? NAUGHT ! We are in a worse plight than our barbarian conquerors, for we have *no* God ; while they at least have many gods and many lords, such as they are. Alas, alas ! the time of the judgment of Jerusalem seems to be near at hand ! The Lord *must* suddenly come to His Temple, and as a Refiner ! I am deeply impressed with the

conviction that the day is very near at hand. Perhaps we shall see it in our lifetime, dear father!

Since writing the last line I have been interrupted by Mary, who has brought to see me a youth, the son of a noble Jewish ruler who was slain by the Romans for his patriotic devotion to his country. He dwells near the Gaza Gate, with his widowed mother, who is a noble lady, honoured by all who speak of her. Between this young man and Mary there exists a beautiful attachment, not ardent enough to be love, but sincere enough for the purest friendship; yet each day their friendship is ripening into the deepest affection. He has just returned from the vicinity of Jericho, at which place he has been sojourning for some days past, drawn thither by curiosity to see and hear the new prophet, spoken of by me at the close of my last letter, whose fame has spread far and wide, and who is drawing thousands into the wilderness to listen to the eloquence that flows from his mouth. The young man had been giving Mary so interesting an account of him that she desired me also to be a listener.

In my next I will write you all I heard; and I trust, dear father, you will patiently bear with me in all things, and believe that, however the investigating character of my mind may lead me to venture upon sacred mysteries, I shall never be less a lover of the God of our father Abraham, nor less thy loving and devoted daughter. Adieu.

ADINA.

LETTER III.

MY DEAR FATHER,

This morning as I was returning from the Temple, whither I had gone to worship and witness the splendid ceremony of the presentation of the first-fruits, I noticed a vast pile of edifices crowning the opposite rock; this I was told was the Tower of Antonia. It seemed to frown sternly down upon the Temple, and at intervals upon its battlements glittered numerous Roman eagles. I had so often heard you relate historical events connected with this celebrated castle that I regarded it with peculiar interest. You, who had so frequently described it to me, seemed to stand by my side as I gazed upon it. The four towers, one at each corner, are still as they stood when you fought from the northernmost one, and defended it almost single-handed against the Romans. But now these barbarians throng its courts, and their bugles, which have sounded from the conquered walls of every land on earth, are even heard by the citizens in the streets of Jerusalem. The insolence and power of the Roman garrison have made the beautiful walk about the base of the tower almost deserted; but of this I was not aware; and attended only by my Ethiopian slave Onia, I lingered to admire the splendour of the cloister once surrounding the treasure-house of the Temple, with its terraces supported by white marble pillars fifteen cubits high, when two Roman soldiers, coming from one of the city gates, approached me on their way back to the castle. It was then that I saw I was alone, the company who had left the Temple with me being gone on far in advance. I drew my veil closely, and would have passed them with a rapid step, when one of them placed himself in my path, and, catching at

my veil, tried to detain me. I left it in his grasp, and was flying, when the other soldier stopped me. This was in full view of the castle, and the soldiers in it only laughed aloud at my shrieks. At this moment a young centurion on horseback appeared, coming down the rocky path that winds round the hill of Zion; and calling aloud to the two men, who were drunk with wine, he galloped forward, and with his sword put them to immediate flight, and rescued me, at the same time sending the soldiers under arrest into the castle. He then addressed me in the gentlest manner, and apologised for the rudeness I had met with from his men, saying that they should be severely dealt with. I was struck with his manly beauty, his civility, and his air of patrician command, although he appeared not more than eight-and-twenty years of age. In order to escort me safely to the streets below, he alighted from his horse, and leading him by the rein, walked by my side. I confess to you, dear father, I had not reached the house of my relative before my prejudices against the Romans were greatly modified. I had found in one of them as courteous a person as I had ever met with among my own countrymen, and for his sake I was willing to think better of his barbaric land and people. He saw through my prejudices, and how I shrank from him as he walked by me; and while we descended the hill he spoke eloquently in defence of his native land, of its fair daughters, of its wise men, its brave chiefs, its power and glory, and its dominion over the whole earth.

When I heard him use these last words, I sighed deeply; for Judah, it is prophesied, should have dominion over the whole earth, and these Romans, therefore, hold the dominion that rightfully belongs to our people. How is this, dear father? How is it that these barbaric men are permitted by Jehovah to sway the sceptre that is the rightful heritage of the Lion of the tribe of Judah? How many times in a day, since I have been in Jerusalem, have I not been reminded of the degradation of my people! How is it that these

enemies of Jehovah, these worshippers of false gods, stand in the holy place, and usurp the power that God has given to us?

I put these questions to Amos, the good priest, upon my return home; for my account of my adventure naturally led to a conversation upon the Roman dominion over the earth. It appears that this noble centurion is not unknown to Rabbi Amos, who describes him as one of the most popular Roman officers in command of the city. I am glad to hear this. Amos also warned me not again to approach the garrison points of the town, as the soldiers take pleasure in giving annoyance to the citizens.

While I was writing the above words, a commotion without, as if something unusual was occurring, drew me to the lattice which overlooks the street that leads from the gate to Bethany, one of the most frequented thoroughfares in the city. The sight that met my eyes was truly imposing, but made my heart sink with shame! It was a pageant, with banners, eagles, trumpets, and gilded chariots; but not the pageant of a king of Israel, like those which dazzled the streets of Jerusalem in the days of Solomon and King David! Not the triumphant passage of an Israelitish prince, but of the Roman Governor! Preceded by a cohort of horse, he rode in a gilded war-chariot, lounging at his ease beneath a shade of blue silk fringed with gold. The horses were snowy white, and covered with silver mail, and adorned with plumes. He was followed by another body of cavalry, consisting of richly attired young men; and, at the head of them, looking more like a ruler and prince than did the indolent Pilate, I beheld the generous centurion who had aided my escape from the two soldiers. His eye sought the lattice at which I stood, and I drew back, but not before he had seen and saluted me. Certainly, father, this youth is noble and courteous enough to be a Jew, and should any providence cause us to meet again, I shall try to convert him from his idolatry to the service of the living

Jehovah. I was not pleased with the appearance of the Governor. He is a dark, handsome man, but too fleshy, and has the countenance of one given to much wine ; and I learn that he is naturally indolent and luxurious, and deficient in decision of character. He is an especial friend of the Roman Emperor, to whose partiality he owes the governorship here. It is, however, better to have a table-lover and an idle man for our master, than a cruel and active tyrant like his predecessor, in an insurrection against whom was slain that eminent man the father of John, the cousin of Mary, of whom I spoke to you in my last letter.

And this reminds me that I have something to relate to you. You will remember, dear father, that I alluded to a stir, that is increasing every day, in reference to a new prophet, who is preaching in the wilderness of Jericho, and whose life is as austere as was that of Elijah ! For three weeks past, troops of citizens have been to the Valley of Jordan to see and hear him, and have so far been carried away by his doctrine as to be baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. Among these is John, the cousin and betrothed of Mary, who, having heard much said by those who had returned of the power with which this man spoke, also went to satisfy his curiosity ; animated, moreover, as he says, with a secret hope that God had again remembered Israel, and sent to us a prophet of reconciliation. Upon his return, we saw that his countenance was animated beyond its wont—for he is usually of a sad and gentle aspect—and that his eyes beamed with an ardent hope, that seemed new-born in his soul. He thus related to us his visit to the prophet of Jordan :

“After leaving the gate and crossing the Brook and Valley of Kedron, I encountered a large company, who were ascending the road that winds over the south side of Olivet. There were men, women, and children ; and they were provided with food in baskets, and travelled as our people do when they come up to the feast of the Passover. I found, on joining

them, that they were directing their steps towards the wilderness, in order to hear the great prophet, whose fame was in all men's mouths. Among them were priests and judges, Sadducees, and Pharisees, and Essenes, and even men of no faith ; for even in Judah we have many thousands who believe in no God,—so long has it been since Jehovah hath visited His people !

“Passing on in front of this company, I being well mounted and they travelling slowly, I at length reached the summit of the hill, from whence I looked back to take a parting glance at the city. How like ‘the City of God’ it sat on its lordly hills ! All the glory of Jerusalem, of the past, came before my memory, and I sighed that that glory had departed, not in the destruction of its edifices, for Jerusalem is still grand and magnificent to the view, but in the downfall of its power. I heard from afar the strains of the Roman bugles, echoing over the valleys where the prophets, priests, and kings lay buried, and reverberating from the Temple walls, where the sacred echoes had aforetime been awakened by the voice of God ! Gethsemane, the fair garden of Solomon, where he tried to create a second Eden, lay at my feet, its walls broken, and its walks tangled and overgrown ; here and there a fig, or an olive, or a solitary palm tree, remaining to tell the passing traveller that here had been ‘the delight of gardens, the abode of pleasure and of mirth, from whence were excluded all who were sorrowful, that no tears might fall upon its enamelled floors, dedicated to voluptuous joy.’ This description of it, given by our poets, passed through my mind, as I beheld it, melancholy and deserted, looking more like a place of tears than of joy—as if its shades would invite the tears of the sorrowful, rather than the silvery feet of the dancer.

“I soon reached the pretty town of Bethphage where, at the inn I beheld a number of horsemen just mounting to ride in the direction of Jericho. Several of them I knew, and, on joining the cavalcade, learned they had for the most part

issued from Jerusalem on the usual errand of curiosity. One of them, however, a wealthy young noble of Arimathæa, was actuated by the same holy desire that burned in my bosom—a desire that we might, in the prophet who was called John, discover a man sent from God. The others were bent on pleasure, or on mere idle curiosity, to see him of whom every one talked throughout all the land of Judea. As Joseph of Arimathæa and I rode on together, we talked of the man we expected to see, and the different reports which were noised abroad respecting him. My companion seemed to believe that he was a true prophet, for, being well read in the Scriptures, he said that the SEVENTY WEEKS of Daniel were now about completed, at the end of which the Messiah was to come? I then asked him if he believed that the Messiah, who was to be 'a Prince and King, and have dominion from the sea to the ends of the earth,' would come in the wilderness, clad in the skins of wild beasts. To this he replied, that he could not regard this prophet as the Messiah; for when the Christ should appear, He was 'suddenly to come to the Temple,' and that we should doubtless first see Him there; but that he was greatly in hopes that the prophet we were going to see would prove to be the messenger foretold by Malachi. Having a roll of the prophet Daniel in my hand—for I took the writings of the prophets to compare them with what I should hear the preacher of Jordan proclaim—I saw, to my surprise, that not only the seventy weeks had nearly reached their completion, but that the expiration of the 'thousand two hundred and ninety days' drew presently nigh! We were both surprised at this coincidence with the advent of this new prophet; and joy and fear trembled in our hearts, mingled with hopes we dared not utter.

"Those who have heard this prophet," continued Joseph, as we rode into the village of Bethany, 'say that he publicly proclaims himself the forerunner of the Messiah. The opinion of the more ignorant who have listened to him is, that it is

Elijah himself returned to the earth ; while others assert that it is Enoch come down from heaven ; and not a few believe him to be Isaiah.'

"Conversing in this manner, we crossed a hill, where, according to tradition, stood the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and where rested the foot of Jacob's ladder ; and from which place, it is believed by many, all good men after the resurrection shall ascend into the third heaven, for it is the common belief that the throne of Jehovah is directly above it.

"At length, after a long day's ride, during which we had overtaken and passed many large companies hurrying forward to hear the prophet, and had met many returning, who spread wonderful accounts of his eloquence, wisdom, and power, we came in sight of Jericho. The city is very stately, with its Roman towers and palaces, and is the favourite winter resort of the governors. The green valley wherein it lay was refreshing to the eyes after our dreary ride all day over the broken and barren hills. On our left, at the distance of a mile from the town, we passed the ruins of the tower and house of Hiel, who rebuilt Jericho in the days of the kings. To the right was the field where the Chaldean army defeated our fathers in battle, and took King Zedekiah captive : the spot was now covered with beautiful gardens, and smiled as if peace had dwelt in its sweet shades from the beginning. On an eminence to the north of us, about half a league off, Joseph, who had often travelled this way, pointed out to me the ruins of Ai, and the hill of ambush, the lurking-place of the warriors of Joshua who surprised and cut off the city. As we approached the city, I could not but recall to mind the period when Israel's hundred thousands, shod with the sandals they had worn forty years in the wilderness, marched seven times round its walls. In imagination I heard their martial tread shaking the very earth, and beheld the princely Joshua, standing on a neighbouring eminence, directing the

solemn march. I heard again the thunder of the trumpets of the hosts of God, as they sounded seven times ; and I saw the proud wall of the city fall, darkening the heavens with the clouds of dust that rolled over the heads of awe-struck Israel ! But how different was the present reality ! The setting sun was gilding the firm towers, turrets, pinnacles, and battlements of the Roman city, lending to it a splendour that moved the soul to admiration ; and the blue sky above it glowed serene without a cloud ; and the encircling vale, instead of echoing to the tread of an armed host for whom Jehovah fought, was now covered with Roman knights and ladies on gay parties of pleasure, and processions of maidens, clad in snow-white vestments, moving to the cemetery of the tombs, casting flowers in their path, and chanting sacred songs ; for it was the day on which the daughters of Jericho celebrate the hapless fate of the lovely daughter of Jephthah by visiting her sepulchre. She was born and buried in this city, where Jephthah long dwelt, ere he removed to Mizpah ; and hither her sacrificed body was conveyed, to be placed in the tombs of her fathers.

“At the gate we were stopped by a Roman soldier, who demanded our passes and the traveller’s tribute ; after paying this humiliating tax, we rode into the city ; for it was our intention to pass the night there and early in the morning walk to the banks of the Jordan, where we understood the prophet was teaching and baptising.”

At this point of the narrative of the cousin of Mary, dear father, I will close this letter. We had all listened with the deepest attention, not so much for the interest of the story contained in itself, as on account of the manner in which he recited what he had seen ; his face being calmly beautiful, his eyes soft and expressive, his voice musical, and his whole aspect the true and expressive manifestation of the intelligence, gentleness, amiability, and noble ardour of piety which belong to his whole character. In my next I will resume his

narrative, dear father ; for when I shall have given it to you wholly, I have many things to ask you, to which it gives rise in my mind. May the blessing of the God of Israel be upon thee, my dearest father !

ADINA.

LETTER IV.

MY DEAR FATHER,

I have had the pleasure to-day, not only of hearing from you, but of being assured of your continued welfare. The messages of parental affection contained in your letter are cherished in my heart. The costly gifts of your generous love, sent by you with the letter, and safely delivered from your hand into mine by your faithful servant Elec, will be worn by me with all a daughter's pride. I regret to hear of the death of Rabbi Israel, while I rejoice that the high office he held with so much dignity has been bestowed upon you by the Proconsul ; for though you may not need its emoluments, dear father, such a selection is a flattering proof of the esteem in which you are held by the Roman Governor.

You need not fear, my dear father, that I shall be carried away from the faith of Israel by any strange doctrines. I will take counsel of your wisdom, and be cautious how, in my inquiries, I adventure upon sacred ground. I have freely written to you for your advice ; and I trust that you will not look upon my questions as expressions of doubt, but as searchings after what is true. I know you are read in the Law beyond all Jews, and that you will remove any difficulties I may meet with in the practices here in Jerusalem, especially in the worship and ceremonies of the Temple.

In my last letter, which will not reach your hands for

some days yet, I commenced giving you the narrative of John, the cousin of Mary, who went down into the wilderness to see and hear the prophet of Jordan. I will not take upon myself to decide or to form an opinion upon anything yet, dear father ; but I shall state facts, and let your wisdom instruct me in the truths that may grow out of them. One thing which your letter states gratifies me and gives me confidence ; it is these words : "Do not fear that the integrity of the laws of Moses, or of the worship of the Temple, or the predictions of the prophets, can be disturbed by any investigations that man can make into them. They are founded in truth, and will abide for ever. The worship of Israel fears nothing from inquiry. But while you ask and question concerning sacred things, remember that they belong to God and must be searched into with awful reverence and profound humility. Any inquiries made into the prophecies with an eye to search out their day of fulfilment are proper and useful ; and as this day seems to be that of fulfilment rather than of prediction, your studies may be suggested and directed by heavenly wisdom ; and, if so, they will be guided to their true issue. As I am so far removed from you, I cannot judge concerning this prophet of the wilderness, yet I should not be surprised if the fulness of time indicated by Isaiah were near at hand ; for the events you enumerated seem to proclaim its approach : such as the lax worship in the Temple ; the bowing down to the Roman idols on Mount Zion ; the profanation of the altar ; and the rule of the heathen over the empire of David. Let us fervently pray, my child, for the fulfilment of the prophecies which promise Messiah to our stricken people ! Let us supplicate for the rising of the Star of Jacob, the Prince of Peace, who shall erect His throne on Mount Zion, and whose sceptre shall be a sceptre of righteousness ; under whose wide dominion Israel shall lift up her head and rule the nations. My daily prayer, made with my face towards Jerusalem, is that I may live to behold

the Hope of Israel, and with my eyes see the splendour of the glory of Shiloh."

These words of yours, my dear father, give me courage. I believe with you that the day of fulfilment of the prophets is at hand, and perhaps is nearer than we believe. When I have completed the history of John's journey to Jordan to hear the prophet you will understand why I speak with such hopeful confidence; and you will agree with me that this preacher of repentance is not one of the class of false prophets against whose fables your letter cautions me.

"We arose at dawn," said Mary's cousin, continuing his interesting narrative, "and leaving the inn, we took our way out of the city by the eastern gate, which we easily found, inasmuch as a multitude of the people were astir and moving in the same direction. Here we were detained for full half an hour by the Gentile guards, till the throng had become so immense that the people trod one upon another, and filled the whole street. Nevertheless, we had to wait until the indolent captain of the gate chose to rise from his morning repose, and then bathe his dainty limbs, and then break his fast, all which he did very deliberately, before he would suffer the gate to be opened: such slaves are we to such masters! Oh, when shall arrive the day wherein, as saith Isaiah, 'our gates shall be open continually; they shall not be shut day nor night, that men may bring unto thee the forces of the Gentiles, and that their kings may be brought captives to our feet'?"

"Having passed out of the gate, my friend of Arimathæa and myself drew aside a little from the crowd, and crossed the plain towards Jordan. The morning was balmy; the sun made all nature glad; the dew reflected a myriad lesser suns, and the earth appeared strewn with diamonds. For a little way the road lay between fields of corn, and gardens; but soon it crossed the open plain, whereon were droves of wild asses, which lifted their small spirited heads on our approach, eyed

us with timid curiosity, and then bounded off to the wilderness southward with the speed of antelopes. As the great body of the people took their way across the plain we knew the prophet must be in that direction; and we were right, for we at length found him on the banks of Jordan, below the landing-place and ford, opposite Jericho, on the great caravan road to Baalbec and Assyria, that long and weary road so often travelled by our forefathers when they have been led into captivity—the road which so many kings have watered with their tears! We gazed upon it with emotions of sadness, and with tearful prayers besought Jehovah to return, and once more visit the remnant of His people, and not be angry with us for ever. After we had approached the Jordan some distance above the ford, we beheld the multitude listening to the prophet, far to the south of us, on the edge of the desert, which in this quarter approaches very near to Jericho. As we traversed the banks of the flowing stream, we came all at once upon a pillar of stones partly immersed in the water. ‘This,’ said my companion, stopping, “is the Mount of Twelve Stones, which Israel set up to commemorate the passage of the Jordan. Here they crossed on dry ground.’

“I counted the stones, and found but seven of them remaining. What vicissitudes, I reflected, hath not Israel passed through since the hands of our fathers placed that heap together! Generations of judges, and long lines of kings; captivities succeeding captivities; wars, conquests, and defeats, and finally subjection, till we are no longer a people; having a ruler, indeed, but whose power is a mockery—a Herod, holding his authority by the courtesy of the imperial monarch of Rome. Alas! with the end of the reign of such a shadow of a king the sceptre will for ever depart from Judah!” he added bitterly.

“Then will Shiloh come!” exclaimed my cousin Mary, with animation.

“Yes; Judah must be abased to the very dust before she

can rise ; and with Shiloh king her glory will fill the whole earth," replied John, with hope once more beaming in his eyes.

"At length we drew near the dark mass of human beings which we had beheld afar off, assembled round a small eminence near the river. Upon it, raised a few cubits above their heads, stood a man upon whom all eyes were fixed and to whose words every ear was attentive. His clear, rich, earnest tones had reached us as we approached, before we could distinguish what he said. He was a young man, not above thirty, with a countenance such as the medallions of Egypt give to that Joseph of our nation, once their prince. His hair was long, and waved freely about his neck ; he wore a loose garment of camel's hair, and his right arm was naked to the shoulder. His attitude was as free and commanding as that of a warrior, yet every gesture was persuasive and graceful. With all his fervid and sublime eloquence, there was an air of the deepest humility on his countenance, combined with an expression of the holiest enthusiasm. The people listened eagerly to him, for he spake like the Prophets of old, and chiefly in their prophetic words. His theme was the Messiah :—

"‘O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God ; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity,’ he was saying, as we came up, in continuation of what had gone before. ‘Turn unto the Lord, and say unto Him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously. Behold, He cometh who will heal your backsliding, and will love you freely ! He will be as the dew unto Israel ! He shall grow as the lily, and cast forth His roots as Lebanon ! His branches shall spread, and His beauty shall be as the olive tree, and His fruit shall be for the healing of the nations ! They that dwell under His shadow shall return and dwell evermore ; and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered, for beside Him there is no Saviour.’

"‘Of whom speaketh the prophet these things ?’ asked

one who stood near me, of his neighbour, and then of me ; for by this time we had taken up our position as close to the prophet as we were able, for I did not wish to lose one word that fell from the lips of a man who could thus empty cities, and people the wilderness with their inhabitants.

“ ‘Of Messiah—listen!’ answered a scribe, who seemed ill pleased to have his attention interrupted by this question. ‘His words are plain. Hear him.’

“ ‘Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, for the day of the Lord cometh!’ continued the prophet, in a voice that rang out clear over the wilderness; ‘for, behold, the day is at hand when I will bring again the captivity of Judah. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe! The day is at hand when the Lord shall roar out of Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem.’

“ ‘Art thou not Elias?’ asked one aloud.

“ ‘I am he of whom it is written, The voice of one crying in the wilderness: make straight a highway for our God. The day of the Lord is at hand. I am but the herald who is sent before to prepare the way of the Lord!’

“ ‘Art thou not the Messiah?’ asked a woman who stood near him, and seemed to worship his very lips.

“ ‘He who cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear!’ he replied in a voice of deep humility. ‘He who cometh after me hath His fan in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather the wheat into the garner, but will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Therefore repent ye, repent ye, and return unto the Lord your God. Repent, and be baptised for the remission of your sins, for the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; take heed that ye be not consumed! The axe is laid at the root of the tree; therefore every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire.’

“ ‘Master,’ said a Levite, ‘dost thou speak these things to us who are of Israel, or to these Gentiles and Samaritans?’ for

there were not a few Roman soldiers among the multitude, drawn hither by curiosity, and also many people from Samaria, nay, even from Damascus.

“Go and cry in the ears of Jerusalem, saith the Lord ; for my people hath committed two evils : they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. The Lord hath made me this day an iron pillar and brazen wall against the whole land—against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land ! And yet thou sayest, O Israel, thou hast not sinned ! thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backsliding shall reprove thee. Repent, and do works meet for repentance, everyone of you, for ye have polluted the land ; neither say, Where is the Lord that brought us up out of the land of Egypt ? He is provoked to anger every day by your hardness of heart and stiffneckedness. Amend, amend your doings ! Trust not to lying words, saying, The Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord ! Ye have made it a den of robbers ! Your sacrifices therein are become an abomination to the Lord !”

“‘This would touch us who are priests,’ said a priest, and his brow crimsoned with anger. ‘We are not robbers.’”

“‘Thus saith the Lord,’ continued the youthful prophet, as if it were God Himself speaking from Horeb, so that we trembled as we heard him : ‘Woe be unto the shepherds that destroy my sheep ! I will visit upon you the evil of your doings. How is the gold become dim—how is the most fine gold changed ! The precious sons of Zion, how are they esteemed ? Her priests were purer than snow ; they were whiter than milk ; they were more ruddy than rubies ; their polishing was of sapphire ! Their visage is blacker than coal ; they feed the children of my people with ashes for bread ! Woe to Zion, for the sins of her prophets and the iniquities of her priests ! Run ye to and fro through the streets of

Jerusalem and seek in the broad places thereof, saith the Lord, if ye can find a man that executeth judgment, that seeketh truth ! Though they say the Lord liveth, surely they swear falsely. Hear ye this, O priests, and hearken, O house of Israel ! Woe unto ye, ye priests, for ye have transgressed. I have seen in the prophets of Jerusalem a horrible thing : they commit adultery and walk in lies, saith the Lord. My people have transgressed for lack of knowledge ! Therefore I will reject thee, saith the Lord ; thou shalt be no priest to me since thou hast forgotten the law of thy God. Therefore doth the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein languisheth. Therefore do swearing and lying, and killing and stealing, and adultery, break out in the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. Woe unto you, ye priests !"

"Many of the Levites then turned and left him, and went away angrily murmuring ; and they would gladly have done the prophet a mischief, but they feared the multitude, who said he had spoken only the truth of them.

"But the elders of Israel, who are not priests, who spring from Abraham — shall not these be saved by Abraham, master ?' inquired, or rather asserted, a rich ruler of our city, after the tumult caused by the withdrawal of the Levites had a little subsided.

"The youthful prophet fixed his eyes, that shone like two suns, upon the old man's face, and said impressively, 'Begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father ; for I say unto you,' he added, pointing to the pebbles at his feet, 'that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. He is of Abraham who doeth righteousness ; therefore repent, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.'

"Here was heard some murmuring among a group of many Pharisees and Sadducees, but darting his lightning glance towards them, as if he could read their very hearts, the preacher cried—

"O generation of vipers ! Who hath warned *you* to flee

from the wrath to come? The day cometh when He who is to come shall sit as a purifier by His furnace. Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance. Wash thy heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. And ye, daughters of Judah, repent you of the vain thoughts that lodge within you,' cried he, addressing many females in rich apparel and plaited hair; 'gird yourselves with sackcloth, lament and howl; put away these abominations out of my sight, and fear the Lord. Though thou clothe thyself with crimson, though thou deck thyself with ornaments of gold, though thou rend thy face with painting, in vain shalt thou make thyself fair; for I hear the voice of the daughters of Zion bewailing themselves, and spreading forth their hands in the day when they are spoiled and despised for their iniquities. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!

"Hear, O Israel! Am I a God at hand, and not a God afar off? saith the Lord. Hear ye the message of the Most High—for the day cometh when Jehovah shall once more visit the earth, and talk face to face with His creatures. Behold, the day hath come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a King to reign and prosper, who shall execute judgment and justice on the earth.

"Behold, the day hath come, saith the Lord, in which Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely; when I will set up shepherds over them, which shall feed them, and they shall lack nothing!

"Arise! shine, for thy light is come! Hear, O Israel! for Zion's sake I will not hold my peace; I will not rest until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. Arise! shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee! Darkness covereth the earth, and gross darkness the people, as saith Esaias; but the Lord shall rise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. The Gentiles shall come to His light, and kings to the brightness of His rising.

He shall be called THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, and shall be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God. The Spirit of the Lord is upon me to proclaim the acceptable year of His coming. He hath set me a watchman upon thy walls, O Israel, and I may neither hold my peace day nor night, nor keep silence, nor seek rest, till He come who hath sent me forth His messenger before His face. How shall I refrain from my message of joy? How shall I not speak of His fame? His sons shall come from afar, and His daughters shall be nursed at His side. The people of the nations shall fly as a cloud, and as doves to their windows, to behold, to fall down and adore Him. The isles shall wait for His law, and kings shall minister unto Him, even unto the Holy One of Israel. He saith, I, the Lord, am thy Saviour and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob. Say ye to the daughters of Zion, Behold, your salvation cometh; behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him. Ho, every one that thirsteth, he now cried, raising his voice like the chief of a host, till the farthest heard, 'come ye to the waters; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money and without price. Incline your ear, and come unto Him. Hear, and your soul shall live. Repent, keep justice and judgment, and prepare a contrite heart to offer Him when He cometh; for thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell in the high and holy place—with him, also, that is of a contrite and humble spirit. Peace, peace to him that is afar off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord.

"Sing unto the Lord a new song, and His praise from the ends of the earth; for thus saith God the Lord, He that created the heavens, and stretched them out; He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; He that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: Behold my servant whom I uphold—mine elect

in whom my soul delighteth : I have put my Spirit upon Him ; he shall show forth judgment to the Gentiles ; a bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench. I, the Lord, saith Jehovah to the Only Begotten, I have called Thee in righteousness, and will hold Thy hand, and keep Thee, and will give Thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison. I am the Lord, and my glory will I not give to another ; yet have I made Him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. Look unto Him, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth ; for unto Him every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Our Redeemer, the Lord of Hosts is His name, the Holy One of Israel !'

"All this was spoken with an enthusiasm and a fire that made every pulse bound.

"Such," said John, "was the wonderful fervour of this mighty prophet's preaching ; and to those who read the books of the prophets every word shone with the brightness of the sun. It seemed to me I had only to look round to behold the Messiah ! The immense multitude stood awed and silent when the preacher ceased. I gazed upon him with adoring reverence. My heart was filled with holy joy ; for I now believed and knew that God had remembered Zion, and was about to display greater wonders on earth than any He had yet shown forth. Leaving the eminence, the prophet said, and I thought he fixed his eyes on me, 'Ye who desire to be baptized for the remission of sins, that your hearts may be cleansed for the visitation of this Holy One of God, follow me to the river-side !' Thousands obeyed, myself among the first. I trembled all over with a sweet pleasure when he took me by the hand, and asked me if I believed in Him who was to come, and would prepare the way for His abode in my heart by being baptized, which rite also was to be a sign and a pledge that when I should behold the Shiloh

rising I should acknowledge Him. Not less than one thousand were baptized by him that day in Jordan, confessing their sins, and declaring their hope of pardon through the name of the Unknown One who was soon to come. Among these baptized men were Pharisees and Sadducees, rulers and lawyers, and one grey-headed Roman soldier. Joseph of Arimathæa was not baptized, as he said he wished to examine into the subject fully before he could believe.

"After the baptism, the whole company dispersed in groups, and the prophet returned, till the cool of the evening, into the wilderness, where his repast was locusts and the wild honey of the desert. When he reappeared, he again spoke to an increased multitude. In this second sermon he explained more clearly the application to Messiah of the glittering chain of prophecies he had quoted in the morning, and thus enabled me to discern more fully than I had before done the true character of the expected Messiah."

With this remark of his, dear father, I close my long letter. I make no comments. I will only say that my expectations are awakened, and that I am looking, with thousands of others, for the near advent of the Messiah.

Your daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER V.

MY DEAR FATHER,

Although but three days have passed since I completed my last letter to you, I am so solicitous to have your opinion and counsel upon the remarkable events now stirring the mind of Israel that I cannot withhold from you the relation of the remaining circumstances connected with the visit of

Mary's cousin, John, to the divine prophet of Jordan. Inasmuch as my cousin's words have made a deep impression upon my mind, and moved me to believe with him in the truth of the prophet's sayings, it is meet that you should know all that he has told me, and that has influenced my feelings and opinions, in order that you may judge of the weight and estimate the value of all I have heard; and be assured, dear father, that I am ready to be governed in all things by your wisdom and learning. Listen, then, with patience to the remainder of this young man's narration.

"After the prophet had ended his second discourse, and baptized fully two hundred more in the sparkling waters of Jordan," resumed my eloquent cousin, "he sent them away to the city to abide and to buy meat; for few, in their eagerness to hear him, had brought provisions with them. Many, before leaving him, drew near to receive his blessing of love; and it was touching to see venerable men, with locks shining like silver, lean upon their staves, and bend their aged heads before the youthful Elias, as if in acknowledgment of his divine mission. Mothers also brought their infants, that he might bless them; and youths and maidens knelt reverently at his feet with tears of love and penitence. Calmly he stood upon the green shore, like an angel who had descended upon earth, and blessed them in words all new to our ears, but which thrilled our hearts with some secret power that agitated us with trembling joy:

"In the name of the LAMB of God, I bless thee!"

"What can be the meaning of these words?" asked Mary, with gentle earnestness. Her betrothed could only reply that he knew not.

"At length, one after another, the multitude departed, save a few who encamped beneath trees on the banks of the river. Joseph of Arimathæa and I were left almost alone, standing near the prophet, and regarding him with reverential curiosity. The sun was just disappearing behind the distant

towers of Jericho, and painting with the richest purple the hills between the river and Jerusalem. Jordan, flushed with the reddening radiance, rolled past like a river of liquid gold embanked in emerald. The brow of the prophet, lighted up by a sun-ray that shone between the branches of a pomegranate tree, seemed like the face of Moses when he came down from Sinai, glorious with light. He appeared rapt in heavenly meditation, and we stood silent, and gazed upon him, not daring to speak. At length he turned towards us, smiled, and saluted us, then grasped the crook or staff on which he had been leaning—for he was weary and pale with his labours of the day—and slowly walked down the shore in the direction of the wilderness. He had not advanced many steps when I felt an irresistible impulse to follow him. I burned to talk with him—to sit at his feet and ask him questions about the great things I had heard him utter in both his discourses. I wished him to explain and unfold what had seemed mysterious, and yet teeming with mighty wonders. I panted for light—for truth. I yearned that he should open the Scriptures to me, and impart to me that unlimited knowledge of them which he possessed. I therefore said to my companion, ‘Let us follow him, and learn more of those great things which we have this day heard.’

“Joseph, like myself, being anxious to hold converse with the prophet, at once assented, and we proceeded slowly after him, as he moved in a contemplative mood along the desert path. The sun had already gone down ; the full moon rose on the opposite shore ; and the prophet stopped as if to gaze upon its autumnal beauty. We drew near to him. He beheld us, but did not avoid us ; seeing which, I advanced with timid confidence, and said—

“‘Holy prophet of the Most High God, wilt thou permit two young men of Israel to speak with thee, for our hearts yearn towards thee with love?’

“‘And we would fain abide with thee in the desert, Rabbi,’

added Joseph, 'for it does not seem well for thee to dwell thus alone.'

"'But chiefly,' said I, 'we would inquire of thee touching the advent of the Mighty One, whose near coming thou dost foretell.'

"'Friends,' said the prophet, in a calm and gentle manner, 'I am a dweller in the desert, and abide alone from choice. I approach men only to proclaim my message. The joys of earth are not for me. My mission is my delight. Its duration is short. Its aim is worthy the greatest prophet of God, yet am I, the least of them, not worthy to be called a prophet; and before the splendour of Him whom I announce to the world, I am the dust of the balance. If ye have sought me to search after knowledge, come and sit down with me upon this rock, and let me hear what ye would ask of me, that I may answer and go my way."

"This was said softly, gently, almost sadly, and in a tone that made me love him more and more. I could have cast myself upon his bosom and wept, for I was deeply touched that one chosen by Jehovah to become His prophet to earth should yet show such lowliness of heart and sincere humility. We seated ourselves on either side of him, for he suffered us not to place ourselves upon the ground at his feet, saying reproachfully, as he had done to those whom we had seen kneel to him, 'I also am a man!' The scene and the hour were well fitted for such converse as we were about to hold. The broad disc of the moon poured a flood of radiance full upon us, and lent a hallowed softness to the divine countenance of the youthful prophet. The Jordan, dark as India's dye, darted swiftly past at our feet, between its deeply-shaded banks, sending up to our ears a faint murmur in its pebbly passage. Above our heads swelled the vaulted arch of the dwelling-place of Jehovah, with its myriads of altar-fires. To our left lay Jericho, just visible, looking like a black mass of castellated rock, unillumined save by a single watch-fire which

burned upon its loftiest tower. Behind us stretched the desert, waste, cheerless, yet grand in its desolate expanse.

"Afar off rose upon the air, borne to us at intervals, the voice of a singer in one of the camps; and near us, upon an acacia tree, sat a solitary bulbul, which unceasingly sang its sweet and varied hymn to the listening moon.

"'All things praise God—shall we be silent?' said the prophet. 'Let us sing the evening hymn of the Temple.'

"He then began in a rich, melodious chant, such as I have never heard from the priests, our sacred psalm to the whole creation of God. We joined our voices with his, and the tide of praise floated over the waters, and echoed and re-echoed from the opposing shores, as if the banks and stream, the trees, hills, and sky, had found voice as well as we:—

"'Praise, praise, praise ye the Lord!

Praise Him in the heights! Praise Him in the seas!

Praise Him, men of Israel! Praise ye the Lord!

For He exalteth high His people,

And reigneth evermore!

"'Praise Him, all ye angels! Praise Him, all ye hosts!

Praise Him, sun and moon, and all ye stars of light!

Praise Him, fire and hail! Praise Him, storm and snows!

For He judgeth the earth in righteousness.

And reigneth evermore!

"'Praise, praise, praise ye the Lord!

Praise Him, winged fowl, and herds, cattle, and all beasts!

Praise Him, kings and people, princes, priests, and judges!

Praise Him, youths and maidens, old men and children!

"'Praise the Name, let them praise the Name,

Praise the Name of the Lord God of Hosts!

For His name alone is excellent,

His glory above the heavens:

Israel is His first-born—a people well beloved!

Praise! let Israel, therefore, praise Him!

Praise Him evermore,

Evermore,

Ever, evermore!

"Never shall I forget the effect produced upon my inmost being by this hymn, sung at such a time, and in such a place, and in such company. The prophet sang like the leader of a choir of angels. My heart leaped at the sound, as if it would break out, take wing, and soar away from the earth! When we called on the winds and the fowls of the air to praise Jehovah with us, it seemed as though the thrilling voice of the bulbul poured forth in a wilder, richer, more joyous tide of song, and the audible wind bent the adoring trees, and mingled its mystic whispers with the psalm of men! Surely, thought I, it is good for me to be here, for this is none other than the gate of Paradise!

"After a few moments' silence, the prophet spoke, and said,—

"'You sought me, brethren of Israel; can I do aught for you?'

"'We would hear more, great prophet, touching this mighty man, if man he may be termed, who is to come after thee,'" said Joseph.

"'I can tell ye but little, my brethren, save what ye have heard from me this day. The future is veiled. I bear a message, indeed, but I may not break the seal and read. I am but the messenger of God to man. To you it shall be given to know what is now unknown to me. Happy, thrice happy, are ye who will behold, face to face, the Divine One whom I can only behold afar off. If it be permitted me to see Him, it will be but for a brief space, for when He cometh I depart—my errand is done. Blessed are those who live to witness His glory, and to hear the gracious voice of God proceeding from His anointed lips."

"'When will be His advent, and with what form and power cometh this Divine Being?' I asked.

"'As a man, but not with such comeliness of form that men should desire Him. His appearance will be humble, lowly, and meek.'

"Yet you said to-day, Rabbi,' I continued, 'that His power should be infinite, and that of His kingdom there should be no end. You spoke of the glory of His dominions, and of the bowing down of Gentile kings beneath His sceptre.'

"This I cannot explain—it is a mystery to me! I speak as God, by whom I am sent, giveth me utterance. I know that He who cometh after me is greater than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose.'

"You taught us this evening, holy prophet, that he would be the Lord from Heaven; and yet that Esaias saith He will be despised and rejected of men, wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities!'

"The spirit of God teaches me that these words apply to Shiloh; but I cannot comprehend how these things can be," the prophet answered, with deep sadness.

"May I remind you, good Rabbi,' said Joseph, 'that you taught us how that this Divine One should die, though He is Lord of life, and be numbered in His death with transgressors, though called the Holy One of God?'

"And such will be the things that are ordained to happen; but seek not to know what no man hath had revealed to him. The Divine Messiah Himself must be His own interpreter. Blessed will be the eyes that behold Him, and they that listen to the wisdom of His mouth, and keep the law of His lips!'

"May I ask you, holy prophet of the Lord," said Joseph, 'how is it that He whom you are sent by God to bear witness to can be the Deliverer of Israel, when you predict for Him so sad a fate? Messiah is to restore Jerusalem, and the glory of the Temple, and the splendour of its worship—so saith Esaias, so say Ezra and Jeremiah. He is called a Mighty Prince, a King, the Redeemer of Israel, who shall rule the nations, and have dominion from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth! We have therefore looked

for, in the Messias of the prophets, a powerful potentate, who shall reign in Jerusalem over the whole earth, and subdue all nations, bringing their kings captive at His footstool, and binding their princes with chains; before whom every knee shall bow—a Monarch who shall not leave a heathen sandal to tread on the sacred soil of Judæa, and who shall establish the worship of Jehovah in every place where now rises a temple of idolatry.’

“‘His kingdom is not of this earth,’ answered the prophet.

“‘How then may we interpret the prophet David, who maketh the Lord to say, I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion? Also, how shall we interpret the sayings of Esaias, who, prophesying of the blessed Christ of God, hath these words: Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon His kingdom, to order it and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth, even for ever?’

“‘I know not. These secrets are with God. I can reveal nothing. I am but the trumpet through which Jehovah speaks; I know not the words I utter. This I know, that the smallest child and the lowliest hireling that liveth in the day of Messias is greater than I. I am the last of the prophets. I stand on the threshold of that glorious kingdom, the greatness and brightness of which they saw afar off, like some indistinct heavenly vision. Nearer than they, I am permitted to catch clearer glimpses of its glory, and it may be vouchsafed to me to see more than I now behold; but of this I have no certain revelation. It is for me to open the last door that leads out from the night of prophecy into the glorious dawn of the day of fulfilment; but I am not permitted to enter beyond the threshold, or to share in its blessings. All who come after me will be preferred before me. But the will of Jehovah be done! I am His creature, and it beseemeth not a child of dust to murmur. Rather let me rejoice that the Day-star is about to rise, though his beams, that shine on all

the earth, shine not on me.' This was said with the most touching pathos.

"We were both deeply moved—I myself even to tears—hearing these words spoken by him. My heart yearned towards him with the most sacred sympathy. I sank on my knees, and kissing his hand, bathed it with my tears. He gently raised me, and said, in a sweet voice, 'Beloved brother, thou shalt see Him to whom I bear witness; and He will love thee, and thou shalt rest in His bosom.'

"At this saying," continued the cousin of Mary, whose voice was tremulous with lively sensibility as he spoke hereof, "I burst into tears once more; and rising, I walked a little way apart, and lifting up my eyes towards heaven, I prayed the God of our fathers that I might be found worthy of this blessed honour.

"'And shall I also behold this mighty Son of God?' asked Joseph, anxiously.

"The prophet took his hand in his own, and fixing upon him his eyes of prophetic brightness, said slowly, and in tones awe-inspiring, and painfully sorrowful—

"'Thou shalt one day bear Him in thine arms, and lay Him upon a couch which thou hast prepared for thine own rest. Thou knowest not now what I say, but thou shalt remember it when it cometh to pass.'

"When he had thus spoken, he rose; and waving his hand to us both, he walked rapidly away towards the desert, and was soon lost in the obscurity of the darkness which hung over it.

"'Didst thou hear him?' asked Joseph of me at length, after some minutes' pause. 'What can his words mean? They are prophetic of some fearful event. His eyes betrayed some terrible meaning. My heart is troubled.'

"'And mine rejoiceth,' I answered. 'We shall see Him! I shall be near Him! Oh, if He be like this sweet prophet of God, I shall love Him with all my soul's being. How

wonderful that we are to be thus associated with this Divine One ! Welcome the hour of His blessed advent !'

" 'Wilt thou welcome the advent of a sufferer ?' abruptly asked a voice so near that it startled us ; and looking round we saw, standing within the shadow of a wild olive tree, a young man who was a stranger, but to whom I afterwards became deeply attached. His face was pale and thoughtful, and his form slight, but of the most symmetrical elegance. His question at once made me sorrowful, for it recalled the sad prophecies of Esaias.

" 'He is also to be King and Monarch of the world, and infinitely holy and good,' I said. 'If thou hast been near, thou hast heard the glorious things the prophet hath spoken of Him.'

" 'I have been near—I was reclining beneath this tree when you seated yourselves yonder. Be not deceived. The Divine Man who is to come must be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He is to be rejected by Israel and despised by Judah. Those whom He comes to bless will despise Him for His lowliness and obscurity. His life will be a life of tears, and toil, and heaviness of heart, and He will at last be cut off from among the living, with the ignominy due only to a transgressor. Dost thou welcome the advent of a sufferer ?'

" 'But how knowest thou this ? Art thou a prophet ?' I asked, full of surprise and admiration.

" 'No, brother, but I have read the prophets. I heard, moreover, the words of this holy man, sent from God ; and he speaks more of the humility of the Christ than of His kingly grandeur. Believe me, the kingdom of Shiloh is not of this world. It cannot be of this world, if such is to be His life and death ; and that this is to be His life, Esaias clearly states. Let me read to you his words.' He then took a roll of parchment from his bosom, and read by the clear moonlight that mysterious and inexplicable passage which

beginneth with the words, 'Who hath believed our report?' When he had ended, and perceived the impression he had made upon our minds, he resumed: 'This is not the history of a prosperous earthly monarch, but rather the painful record of a life of humiliation, of shame, and of contempt.'

"'But thou dost not say, brother,' said Joseph, with some warmth, 'that the sacred Person to whom this prophet bears witness is to be an object of contempt?'

"'Does not Esaias say that He will be despised, beaten with stripes, rejected of men, imprisoned, and put to death like a transgressor of the law?'

"'There can be no question that Esaias speaks of the Messiah,' I remarked.

"'This prophet of Jordan now bears testimony to Esaias, and plainly maketh application of his words to Him whom he has come beforehand to proclaim,' answered the young man, with singularly graceful eloquence. 'Let us who have been baptised this day for the remission of our sins expect a Messiah of sorrows, not a conquering prince. Let us behold one who is to humble Himself beneath the yoke of human infirmities, that He may be exalted, and draw all men after Him to a kingdom in the heavens.'

"'But the throne of David,' objected Joseph——

"'Is at the right hand of God.'

"'But Jerusalem, and its rule over the nations——'

"'The Jerusalem that is above will be over all.'

"'But His kingdom that is to be everlasting——'

"'Is where *life* is everlasting. How can He rule an everlasting realm here on earth, except He live for ever, and His subjects also? As Adam fell and lost Paradise, so Messias, like a second Adam, must, as man, humble Himself in human nature, to atone for our guilt; and having made full atonement for us by His life and His death, He will repurchase the kingdom of Paradise for the race of man; but He restores it to us not on earth, but translated on high, where the angels still

guard it in the kingdom of God. It is this kingdom which the prophet proclaims as being at hand, and the path to which our Leader and King can only tread through the dust of Adam's sin, which spreads through this world ; but He shall tread it without the taint of sin upon His robes. He being the bearer of our iniquities, we shall hereby escape their chastisement. Healed by His stripes, we shall be free from the penalty which our sins demand. Laid upon Him will be the transgressions of the world ; and by one mighty sacrifice of Himself, thus laden, as a sin-offering, He shall make atonement for the great family of Adam, and reconcile our race with Jehovah. Such is to be our looked-for Messiah. Alas ! while we look for Him, let us mingle tears with our gladness, and humble ourselves, that one so holy and excellent should be destined to endure these things for our sakes ; and when we beheld Him, let us sink at His feet in grateful adoration of His love and charity, of His mercy and goodness, of His noble self-denial and voluntary offering of Himself as a sacrifice for us ; for there could be no higher or more holy victim than He in the universe of God ; therefore He hath offered *Himself*, according to the words of the prophet, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God !

“When the young man had thus spoken, he went his way. Impelled by an unconquerable impulse, I followed, and threw my arms around him, and embracing him, said—

“‘Of a truth thou art a prophet ! Thy words come home to my heart like the echo of ancient prophecy.’

“‘Nay, I have learned these things from the study of the Scripture,’ he said, with touching candour and modesty. ‘But I have been aided, more than I have words to tell thee, by one who hath wisdom and truth abiding in him above all men, and whom it is my happiness to have for my bosom friend, as he is near my own age. If I have aught of wisdom or of virtue, of goodness or of knowledge of the Scriptures, it is that he hath been my counsellor and teacher.’

“‘What is his name?’ I asked, ‘for I also would go and learn of him.’

“‘He withdraws from the public eye, and hath converse but with few, and shuns all notice. Without his permission I could not take thee to him. Yet I will ask him, if thou desire it.’

“‘What is his appearance, and where doth he dwell?’ I inquired, more deeply interested.

“‘He abides at present at Bethany, my own city. He is so beloved by us that we detain him as our guest. But he dwelleth at other times with his mother, a holy widow of great sanctity, living at Nazareth in humble condition, and he contributes by labour to her support, with the truest filial piety; thus setting an example to the young men of Judah, who in this age make a mock at parental restraint, and under the evil protection which the free licence of the wicked custom of Corban giveth, neglect them, and no longer do aught for their father or mother. Indeed, no one ever approaches and speaks with him without leaving him a wiser and better man.’

“‘Verily,’ said Joseph and I together, ‘you have only increased our desire to behold him. His appearance must be noble.’

“‘He possesseth neither beauty of form nor comeliness to strike the eye; but there sits upon his brow a calm dignity, tempered with mildness, that commands the respect of age and wins the confiding love of childhood. His eyes beam with a light that is pure, as if shining from holy thoughts within, and they rest upon the man to whom he speaks with a tenderness that is like the dewy light of the young mother’s gaze, when she bends with silent happy tears over the face of her first-born. He never smiles; but his face is one soft sunshine of beaming rays, tempered in an indescribable manner with a settled look of sadness, an almost imperceptible shade of permanent sorrow, that seems to foretell a life of trial and suffering. When he reads from the prophets, and unfolds to us with a wisdom that we can regard only as given him from heaven, the great truths that relate to the long-looked-

for, and, as we now believe, the quickly-coming Messiah, he seems to speak by inspiration, yet without emotion, but calmly and naturally, in a low-toned voice, that is never lifted up at any time, nor ever heard in the streets.'

"'He must be another prophet,' said Joseph, with deep earnestness.

"'He does not prophesy nor preach,' answered the young man.

"'What is his name?' I asked.

"'Jesus, the Nazarene.'

"We both promised to remember this name, and as our way to Jerusalem lay through Bethany, we wished much to visit this Jesus; but this step the young man mildly objected to until he should have made known our wishes; he might then, if Jesus desired to see us, send into Jerusalem to summon us to Bethany.

"As the young man was then about to depart, I asked him his name, as he had greatly drawn out my heart towards him, and I felt that if I could be his friend, and the friend of the wise young man of Nazareth who sojourned with him, I should be perfectly happy and have no other desire—save, indeed, to live till the Messiah came, that I might behold Him and lay my head upon His sacred bosom.

"'My name is Lazarus, the scribe,' he answered, as he took his leave.

"Then," said Mary, when her cousin had spoken this name, "I know him well. It is the brother of Mary and Martha, both my friends at Bethany, where I sojourned for a week last year, just before the Passover."

"I am glad to hear this," said John, "for it will be a closer bond of friendship between us." The next day we renewed our acquaintance, and after three days departed together homeward. Upon arriving at Bethany, Lazarus learned that his friend had gone to Cana in Galilee, with his mother, to the house of one of her kinsfolk, whose daughter is in a few weeks to be married.

I have now, my dear father, communicated to you all that John related to us, and you will see what grounds there are to look upon the prophet of Jordan as a man sent from God, or to believe that he is the true Elias, whom Malachi hath foretold, and who, as the most learned of the Scribes say, must first come to proclaim the approach of the Prince of Peace, the Shiloh of Israel's hopes. My feelings, my ideas, my opinions, are at present conflicting and full of doubt. On one hand I am ready to become one of John of Jordan's disciples, and be baptised of him, looking with faith unto Him who is to come after ; on the other, I tremble lest all should be a snare, for it does not seem possible that it is my lot to live in that blessed age when Messias cometh—a period towards which all the patriarchs and prophets have looked, desiring to see His day ; but all have died without possessing the promise, beholding it only afar off. The infinite greatness of this privilege is that which causes me to doubt. Instruct me, dear father ; open to me the treasures of thy wisdom. Thou hast read the prophets. Doth the youthful prophet of the wilderness truly use their predictions in their application to Messias ? Hath this Lazarus truly drawn the sad portraiture of His dark career on earth ? How are the opposing prophecies to be reconciled in any other manner than that in which the young man of Bethany has unfolded them ? Explain to me one other interpretation, dear father : how He can be both King and a prisoner—Lord of life, yet suffer death—with a kingdom boundless as the world, yet despised and rejected of men !

The account brought by John has caused Rabbi Amos to study the prophets ; and indeed all men are looking into them with interest unknown before, for the multitudes that go away from the new prophet noise his predictions abroad throughout all the land. Oh that God were indeed about to bless His people and remember His inheritance !

ADINA.

LETTER VI.

MY DEAR FATHER,

Health and peace to thee, and to all my honoured and beloved friends in Alexandria. I have again seen the excellent Ben Israel, with whom, four months ago, I came from Egypt to sojourn in Jerusalem. He not only delivered to me your letters, with the acceptable gifts you sent by him, but also assured me of your welfare in all things. He is at present absent at Damascus, whither he went soon after his arrival here, in order to buy of the celebrated Syrian blades of that city, which he takes down to Egypt at great profit, with other merchandise. He assures me that he is gaining much wealth by his caravans of commerce : I rejoice thereat, for he is an amiable and worthy man. His entreaties that I should return to Alexandria with him would nearly have overcome my resolution of remaining here, but for the commands you have laid upon me to avail myself of the peculiar privileges which Jerusalem affords for improving the mind. I am, moreover, deeply interested in the issue of the great expectation of Israel. Your letter, dear father, commands me to banish this "new thing" from my mind, and to continue humbly to worship Jehovah after the manner of our fathers. I trust I shall ever do this, my dear father ; and did I discover in this prophet any disposition to bring in a new faith, opposed to the ancient faith of Abraham, I should tremble to listen to him for a moment. You say that this man must be "a false and base prophet," or he would not herald a master so lowly and despised as he professes will be the Christ he bears witness to. "There have been many false Christs and false prophets, my child," you add, "and Israel has run after them as they now run after this John of Jordan, and the result has been that they have

either perished in the wilderness or have been cut to pieces, with their deceiver, by the jealousy of the Roman governors, who looked upon such assemblies as seditious. Hold fast, my child, to the religion of our fathers, and be not carried away, as I fear you are in danger of being, by this wild preacher of repentance. The kingdom of Messiah is not a kingdom of repentance and humiliation, but one of victory, of glory and dominion. Touching those prophecies of humility and abasement which this prophet of Jordan applies to Messiah, they have no application to our expected Shiloh and Prince. They either apply to some lesser prophet who will be the forerunner of the true Christ (for that He will have a forerunner the Scriptures tell too plainly for doubting), or, as some say and believe, and especially the Pharisees, there are to be *two* Messiahs—one who shall come in humiliation and suffering to the Gentiles, as an atonement for the expiation of *their* sins, and one to come to us in regal power, and with a glory and splendour such as no potentate hath ever manifested, and who shall make Jerusalem the metropolis of the globe, and the kings of the earth tributary at His feet. Such is *our* MESSIAH, whom may the Lord of Hosts send us speedily, to lift Judah from the dust of her humiliation! If the lowly man whom this prophet of the desert heralds be a Messiah, he is one to the Gentiles only, whose great iniquities need the self-immolation and humiliation of one come from God as an atonement; but he is not a Messiah to Israel, nor the mighty Prince who shall sit in David's seat on the throne of Zion. Therefore, my child, you as a daughter of Israel have no part in this new thing that cometh out of the wilderness, and after which half the land hath foolishly run mad. Wait! be patient! the day of Israel's glory shall truly arise and shine, and all nations shall see it and rejoice. Think no more of what thy cousin hath told thee. When Messiah cometh He will be heralded by a more glorious and a nobler messenger than a young man of thirty, clothed in skins, and eating for food locusts and

wild honey—one whose origin and authority no man knoweth. Believing that your good sense and sound judgment, my Adina, will at once lead you to adopt my views, I shall not urge them further, as if I seriously feared your defection from the faith of your fathers, an event which would bring my grey hairs down with sorrow to the grave. I believe that this prophet preaches only himself, and, under the mysterious and deceitful semblance of another to come after him, is but gathering an expectant multitude around him to wield them as instruments for his own ambitious ends ; and by the time you write to me again, I expect to learn from you that he openly proclaims himself the Christ, or that he, and all who are led by him, have been destroyed by the swords of the Roman legions."

How can I write to you, my dear father, that which is now rushing to my pen, after such an expression of your sentiments as you have made in this extract from your letter? But I know you are wise, and will not evade truth, in whatever form it may offer itself to you ; I, therefore, with confidence in your justice and wisdom, will faithfully make known to you the events which have transpired relating to the prophet, and all that may take place in Judæa during my abode here. Hear me always with patience, and judge without partiality ; for this is, without doubt, a day of wonderful revelations. I fancy that I can now see your brow darken, and that you say, "Enough of this. Are we to have more of this new prophet?" Yes, my dear father, I am about to relate events more wonderful than any I have yet written, for some of the very priests of the Temple have become believers in the youthful seer.

You will remember how that John, Mary's cousin, stated that many priests and others were offended at the preaching of the prophet whom they went out into the wilderness to see. When they returned to Jerusalem, and made known to the other members of the House of the Priests what had been spoken against them, and how the words of Esaias and Jeremias,

and other prophets, had been applied to them, there arose at once a great outcry against him. Many of the Levites even forgot their duties in the Temple, in holding discourse with the Scribes and Pharisees, and others, in the streets, in the arches of the gates, and in the market-places, touching this new prophet and his bold denunciations of them; being so much the more grieved at these upbraidings because they were, alas! but too well merited. At length Annas, who is High Priest with Caiaphas, sent two of the most learned men of the Temple, Levites of weight of character, to invite the prophet to Jerusalem; for Annas is a wise man, and not easily carried away by rumour or by fables, and, as Rabbi Amos hath told me, he is disposed to look upon the preaching of John—for such is his name—with a serious and reverential mind. The messengers returned after the fifth day, and made their report openly in the court of the Temple, where the High Priests sat to receive them, expecting to behold the prophet in their company. At length, the assembly being convened, the two learned and venerable Levites rose up, and declared that they had delivered the message to John, the son of Zecharias, the prophet of Jordan, and that his answer was given with the reverence due to the station of the High Priest who had sent to him.

"Go and tell the noble High Priest," he had said, "that I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, as it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, who, foreseeing my day, saith, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.' All flesh will soon behold the salvation of God. My errand is neither to city nor Temple, nor will I enter into any house of Israel. He who would hear my testimony concerning Him who is to come after me, let him seek me in the wilderness, where only I am commanded to lift up my voice till Shiloh come."

When the priests heard this answer, they were filled with

anger, and many fiercely cried one thing, and many another : some said that he should be sought out and stoned to death for defying the High Priest ; others, that he should be accused to the Procurator, Pontius Pilate, Governor of Judea, as a seditious and dangerous fellow, a fomentor of insurrections. Caiaphas was of the latter opinion, and wrote, from his tribunal, an epistle to the Roman ruler, making accusation hereof against the prophet of the desert, and recommending Pilate to secure his person, lest further mischief should come of it ; adding, that Tiberius Cæsar, hearing of the matter, would conceive it to be a movement of the whole Jewish nation, intended to overthrow the Roman rule ; and this opinion would bring down an army upon the land, utterly to destroy it. But the milder Annas viewed the whole matter in a different light, and said—

“Men and brethren, let nothing be done hastily. If this man be a false prophet, he will soon perish, and we shall hear no more of him. If, peradventure, as it would appear, he is sent from God, let us not make haste to do him a mischief, lest haply we be found contending against the Lord of Hosts.”

This moderation found favour with but few, but of these few Rabbi Amos was one. But if the priests who thronged the outer court, in presence of the High Priest, were deeply moved at the report of the prophet's answer, their anger became well-nigh uncontrollable when Melchi and Heli, their messengers, rose up, waving their hands for silence, and declared that, after having listened to the prophet to whom they had been sent, they were convinced of the truth of his words and of his divine commission, and had been baptised of him in Jordan, confessing their sins !

The sanctity of the Temple alone prevented the five hundred priests from rushing upon them and smiting them when they heard this. Melchi and Heli were at once placed under arrest by order of the High Priest Caiaphas, for acting in a

manner unbecoming priests of the Most High God. "For," said he, "this is to degrade the Temple to the feet of a wandering impostor, and is an open acknowledgment that truth hath left the worship of Zion, and must be sought for in the deserts of Jordan. Which," he called aloud, "which, men of Israel, is the greater, the altar of the Lord, or the waters of Jordan?—the priest of the Most High, or he of the wilderness? Away with these recreant blasphemers! let them be tried and judged according to our sacred laws." Hereupon the people who had heard John preach were only prevented from rescuing the two priests by the presence of a guard of Roman soldiers, for whom Caiaphas had promptly sent.

From this account, my dear father, you can form some idea of the turmoil which the preaching of this new prophet is producing among all classes. The poorer sort of people are his advocates, and the rich and the rulers, the priests and great men of the nation, oppose him, save a few among the best and wisest. Of these few is Rabbi Amos, who is engaged during all the time he is not on duty in the Temple in searching the Scriptures, to see if these things are so; and every prophecy he reads convinces him more and more that the day of Messias is at hand, and that this prophet is, without doubt, the man who was to be sent from God in the "spirit and power of Elias," to prepare the way before Him. Every evening there are assembled at our house from twelve to eighteen of the chief men of the Jews, who often pass half the night in warm discussions upon these great things; those among them who have heard John being disposed to give him the high rank he claims as forerunner of Shiloh. Among these is Stephen, a man whose father was High Priest, and who is himself a lawyer and student of no mean repute. He has not yet heard John, the prophet; but he openly said last night that, after the most careful examination of all the prophets, he was firmly of opinion that the day of the fulfilment of their prophecies was close at hand, and

that, for his part, he was willing to hail the prophet of Jordan as the true herald of Messiah. Two-thirds of the company agreed with him, but the others doubted, and cautioned the rest not to be rash, declaring that it would be time enough to believe in Messiah when He Himself should come in His own person.

Such, my dear father, is the present condition of the mind of the people of Jerusalem. If the Prince of Glory should indeed suddenly appear, there could be scarcely more tumult, though it would be of a different nature. There is something sublime in the thought that a young man, who dwelleth alone in the wilderness, poor and unknown, should thus move the great heart of the nation : surely his power must be from God. You ask me, and the question is constantly put by the Scribes, and Pharisees, and priests, to the disciples of John : "Does he perform *miracles* ? Show me a miracle, and I will believe in him, for this is the only test of a true prophet's divine commission." No, dear father, he has performed no miracle, unless it be one continuous miracle, whereby he keeps in the wilderness a multitude, daily enlarged, pouring out from the gates of almost every city in Judah, listening to his words, and bowing their heads to the sacred water of his penitential baptism.

As next week Rabbi Amos does not serve in his course in the Temple, and some affairs will take him to Gilgal, where he has three fields now ripe for the sickle, he has yielded to the desire of his daughter Mary and myself to accompany him ; for he does not conceal from us that he shall assuredly visit and hear the prophet, as it will be but two hours' travel from Gilgal to the place where John preaches. You will, I fear, look with disfavour on this journey. But if the worship of our fathers has nothing to fear from falsehood, it surely has nought to fear from truth ; and in either case, I, as a true daughter of Israel, have nothing to fear. If the prophet teach what is false, I shall remain true ; and if he teach what is

true, shall I not be the gainer? I hear you say this is but feeble and womanly argumentation. But as you have more than once declared it to be your belief that I am old and wise enough to judge for myself in most matters, I beg you will suffer me to hear the prophet with my own ears, in order that I may decide whether I ought to give heed to his predictions, or reject them as the fables of a dreamer. One thing is clear—if the Christ that John prophesies be the true Son of the Highest, and is in reality to make His appearance ere long in humiliation and poverty, his rejection by the High Priests, and by the rich and powerful in Judah, is certain. May God, then, remove blindness from our eyes, that, if this be the very Messiah, Israel may recognise her King when He cometh, and not do so fearful a thing in her pride as to reject Him openly! For if she reject Him, who will stand between God and our ill-fated race? Therefore, my dear father, it behoves every man in Israel to examine this matter with a sober and humble mind, and to see that he fights not lightly against what *may* prove the dearest hopes of our people. When I return from the desert, whither we are to travel with litters and mules, I will write you all that I shall have heard.

You will remember the young Roman centurion to whose courtesy I was indebted for rescue from the rudeness of the two Gentile soldiers. He has since then become known to Rabbi Amos, who speaks of him with respect; and as he has of late expressed some interest to learn what the studies are which occupy the Rabbi so constantly, a copy of the prophets has been placed in his hands; but as he professed he was not learned enough to read Hebrew, the good Rabbi, who believed he saw in him a hopeful convert to the faith of Judah, called in Mary, that she might read and interpret to him. But her knowledge of the Roman tongue did not prove sufficient; and at her request the Rabbi sent for me, to come into the marble hall of the corridor, where they sat by the

fountain, under the shade of the acacia which Amos says you took with your own hands from Isaiah's grave, and planted here, many years ago, and which I therefore call "my father's tree."

"Come hither, Adina," said my uncle, affectionately: "here you behold a noble Roman youth whom you must be too generous to have forgotten." I bowed, and scarcely lifted my eyelids from the tessellated floor; for there was a fire in the glance of the handsome youth that they could not encounter. He spoke some words of salutation; but I only heard the voice, which fell upon my heart with a strange vibration, like the sounds of music. Surely these barbarians of Italia have the richest language of all men; compared with it our Hebrew is harsh and strangely guttural. "The Roman centurion," continued Amos, "hath desired to know something of the sacred books of our nation, of which he saith he hath heard much; and of the prophecies, from which he believes the famed Sibylline books were composed."

"I have studied the sacred books of Etruria, of Egypt, and of Persia, as well as of my own people," said the centurion, modestly, "but in all these I find rites and ceremonies, doctrines and laws, that are unworthy to emanate from the Supreme Ruler of so vast a universe. We Romans, in the multiplicity of our gods, seem to deify everything, and in reality deify nothing! We call everything a god, but we realise God nowhere."

"Then thou hast well directed thy inquiries touching this book," answered Amos, with warmth; and he looked on the Roman with respectful compassion. "*Here* is to be found the true and only revelation of Jehovah to men. *Here* is developed a divine character worthy of the Creator of the universe. *Here* are laid down laws and ceremonies, rites and doctrines, commands and precepts, worthy to emanate from the Father and God of all men. Thou shalt hear and judge for thyself. I am but imperfectly skilled in the Roman tongue,

save for daily intercourse ; but behold an Egyptian maiden, who can interpret for thee in the tongue of Græcia or of Italia, and I will place the sacred scroll in her hands while I listen. Come, Adina, open and read the beginning of the book of Moses."

I obeyed, as I would have obeyed you, dear father ; and seated at the feet of Amos, I read and translated aloud into Greek—which the Roman youth had said was even more familiar to him than his native tongue, as it is to all educated persons—the first five hundred lines. These, as you know, give an account of the creation of the world and of man ; of his fall and his expulsion from Paradise ; of the promise of Messias to restore what man had lost ; of the curse denounced upon the creation ; of the slaying of the patriarch Abel ; of the peopling of the earth, its wickedness, and destruction by the flood.

To all this narrative the youthful warrior listened with the profoundest respect and attention ; and when he had thanked me, and asked permission to come and be further taught from the pages which he said seemed, indeed, to be written with the finger of the Supreme Lord of the universe, he asked if the Messias who was to restore all things had yet come ; and if not, when He was to be looked for. This inquiry led to a conversation upon the preaching of John in the wilderness, and his predictions of the near advent of Shiloh. Rabbi Amos, seeing that he was becoming deeply interested in the subject, made me turn to the particular prophecies of Daniel, Esaias, David, and others, and read them to our guest—both those which described, in golden words, the glory and dominion of His power, and those which represented Him as despised and rejected. After I had read all which the Rabbi directed me to read, the young man remained for some time very thoughtful. At length he said,

"I can now understand why men run into the wilderness. I myself wish to hear this prophet."

When Amos told him that he contemplated journeying to Gilgal the next week, and intended to go forth into the desert to hear the preacher, he at once asked permission to go in his company ; but when I remarked that Mary and I were also to go, his dark eyes beamed with pleasure, and he immediately said,

"I will accompany you with a squadron of horse, as the roads are not safe ; for no longer since than yesterday we heard a rumour that the celebrated robber chief, Barabbas, has made his appearance again at the head of a large band on the hills between Ephraim and Jericho, and robbed not only two caravans, but many of those who were travelling to hear this prophet. I will undertake an expedition against him, after seeing you safe to your journey's end."

When we heard of this robber we were not a little disposed to tarry at home ; but Rabbi Amos thanked the centurion, and said he would gladly accept his escort, "inasmuch," he added, smiling, "as I know you Roman knights here in garrison have but little to employ your time, and would esteem an excursion of this kind a privilege. Moreover, you say you must go forth against this robber ; so we do not so much draw on your courtesy as take shelter under your duty."

It is therefore decided, dear father, that we depart early next week for Jericho and Gilgal, and also go into the wilderness to see and hear the prophet. On my return I shall not fail to write you without delay. Till then withhold your judgment, and have confidence in mine. With holy aspirations for the coming of the kingdom of David, and the restoration of his throne in Zion, I greet you with filial love.

Your daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER VII.

MY DEAR FATHER,

My trembling fingers scarcely hold the light reed with which I am about to write you concerning the wonderful things I have seen and heard, but they tremble only with joy. Oh, my father, my dear, dear father, Messias has come! I have seen Him! I have heard His voice! He has truly come! Oh, joy, joy! My eyes have beheld Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write! But I will tell you all. In order that you may believe as I believe, though you have seen Him not, I will give you an account of the events which have happened since my last letter was sent to you. I will try to write plainly and clearly, and keep my bounding heart still and my hand calm, while I set down in order all that has taken place, that your understanding may judge of these things with that candour and wisdom which makes men see in you the wisest Israelite in the land of Egypt.

You will recollect that in my last epistle, which was sent by the Cairo caravan, I mentioned that Rabbi Amos, taking advantage of the cessation of his duties at the Temple, the venerable Elihud being now waiting upon the altar, made up his mind to pay his annual visit to the wheat-fields which he has in charge near Jericho, and which, as you know, are in trust to him for the heirs of the brave soldier, Manasseh, of the tribe of Benjamin, who was slain in trying to rescue Jericho from the Romans. Rabbi Amos also felt no little curiosity to hear John of Jordan, as he is called, whose fame has spread far and wide. At the request of Mary and myself, he consented that we should accompany him. John, the young man who is betrothed to my cousin, had gone to the Sea of Galilee, concerning certain ships which were there in charge of

his brother James and his father, and was to meet us at Gilgal, and accompany us to Jordan ; for he thinks and speaks of nothing now but the prophet of the wilderness, from whom to be absent for a day he considers a great loss.

The road from Jerusalem to Jericho had recently become unsafe, on account of the boldness of an insurrectionary chief called Barabbas, who a year ago rose up against the Romans ; but he was defeated, and his band dispersed into the mountains south of the Sea of Sodom ; at last, driven by famine, he has taken to robbing caravans ; and since the number of travellers has increased greatly between Jerusalem and Jordan, to hear John preach and be baptised of him, he has fallen upon large parties of them, and taken from them all their goods and money. On this account Rabbi Amos accepted the courteous offer of escort made by the young centurion, who had been ordered by the Procurator, Pontius Pilate, to keep the road open between Jerusalem and Jericho ; for even the Roman couriers have been stopped by this fearless robber, and some of them slain. The pride of Rabbi Amos shrank from this dependence upon a Roman arm in a peaceful journey, through his own land ! but there is, alas, dear father, none left among the seed of Abraham to uphold our cause. We can only bow our heads to the yoke the Lord God has placed upon our necks.

Day was breaking when we rose from our couches to prepare for the journey. The mules on which we were to ride were brought into the court by the two swarthy Gibeonite serfs whom Rabbi Amos holds in his service, and were caparisoned with rich saddles, covered with Persian saddle-cloths embroidered with gold. The two pack-mules were also made ready ; on one of them was the travelling equipage of my cousin Mary and my own, which Rabbi Amos smilingly said took up more space than the goods and travelling wares of a Damascus merchant. At sunrise, after we had knelt upon the housetop, in view of the Temple, and mingled our prayers with its

sacrifices and clouds of ascending incense, we went down to the courtyard to set forth on our journey. There was a stout mule for good Rabbi Amos, though the centurion sent him a handsome Persian horse to ride ; but my uncle said that in his youth he had never trusted himself on so uncertain an animal as a horse, and he thought he should scarcely adventure such a feat in his old age ; so he preferred his mule.

Seated upon our cushioned saddles, with our veils ready to draw over our faces, we impatiently awaited the arrival of the centurion and his cohort of horse ; but a Numidian slave came running up, and, bowing to the ground before Rabbi Amos, said that the centurion would meet us at the corner of the two ways, beyond the walls, near Bethany. Thereupon we all set forth, and took our way towards the East Gate, which Pilate has recently repaired, and named the *Porta Cæsar*. We were five persons in all—Rabbi Amos, my cousin Mary and myself, and the two Gibeonites—both of whom were young men, whose fathers for many centuries had been servants in the family of Amos, even from the time of Joshua, when this people deceived the great leader by their craftiness, and were doomed to perpetual servitude. I am much struck with the appearance of this singular race of men. They have very dark faces, eagle-beak noses, flashing black eyes, and slender, lithe forms. They look cunning and treacherous, but seem to be cowardly, and easily controlled by firmness. They are incapable of attachment, and kindness seems to be thrown away upon them. I heard a singular tradition about them from one of the Levites who often visits Rabbi Amos, namely, that they are descended from the servants of Noah, who were saved with him in the ark, but who, as being of an inferior rank, were not included in the record of Noah's family. Doubtless you have heard the same idle tradition.

The morning was bright and cheerful ; the golden sun poured his light over Temple and tower, castle and roof, wall and rampart, hill and grove, valley and brook, one and all of

which were irradiated with the glory of his morning beams. As we turned the street leading to the Sheep Gate, we passed the house of Caiaphas the High Priest, whom I saw standing upon the marble porch of his magnificent palace. He was not arrayed in his sumptuous robes, with the breast-plate of dazzling stones and kingly cap, as I had seen him in the Temple, but was dressed in a flowing black robe, over which was thrown a scarf of white linen ; and upon his snow-white locks he wore a scarlet hood—a dress common to all the priests ; so that if I had not recognised him by his tall and commanding form, and flowing white hair, and piercing eye, as he surveyed us, I should not have known that this was the High Priest. He spoke to Rabbi Amos, who did him reverence, and humbly did I bend my own head before the majesty of the representative of God on earth.

A little further on we met a party coming from the country beyond Kedron, with large cages upon their mules, filled with turtle-doves and young pigeons, which they were carrying to the Temple, to be sold there for sacrifices. My heart pitied the innocent things, whose pretty blue heads were thrust through the rough bars of their prison-houses ; and they cast their soft eyes up at me, as if asking me to deliver them from their bondage. And when I reflected that their innocent lives were to be offered up for the sins of the men and women of Israel, my cheek burned with the blush of shame, that we should be so guilty before the Lord God that the innocent must die for us. As Mary was riding behind me, in order to let the laden mules pass with their immense cages, one of the turtle-doves, affrighted by the noise of the streets, extricated itself from between the bars, and, spreading its wings, flew into the air, and then, winging its way towards the open country, soared far above the city walls and the lofty summit of the octagonal tower of Psephinos, and disappeared in the distance. I felt rejoiced at the innocent bird's escape, and sent my good wishes for its safe return to its lodge in the

wilderness. Just before we reached the Sheep Gate, by which we were to gain the road to Jericho, we met a poor blind man leading a lamb, or rather being led by a tame lamb. He also had two pigeons in his bosom. He was asked by Rabbi Amos, who knew him, whither he was going. He answered that he was going to the Temple to sacrifice them.

"Nay," cried Amos, with surprise, "thou wilt not sacrifice thy lamb, Bartimæus!"

"I have promised them to God, Rabbi Amos, and I may not break my promise without sin."

"But thy lamb leadeth thee everywhere. It is eyes to thee. Thou canst not move without it."

"God will provide me another lamb," he answered, his face beaming with hope.

"But thy doves? Thou earnest by them many a mite in a day, they are so well taught in cunning tricks to please children. If thou must sacrifice according to thy vow, spare these creatures so necessary to thee, and here thou hast money to buy doves and another lamb," answered my benevolent uncle.

"Hear what I have to say," answered Bartimæus. "My father fell sick, and was like to die, and I vowed a vow to God that if He would heal the old man, my father, I would sacrifice unto Him one of my doves. The next day my mother, who has nourished my childhood, and loved me with all her heart though I was born blind, also fell sick. I then vowed my other pigeon. The same night my little daughter, my little blind daughter, whose face I never saw, and who never saw her father's face, was sick nigh unto death. Then was it that I vowed all that remained to me, even the lamb of my bosom, whom I love next to my child! My father, my mother, my child are restored, and in my joy I am on my way to the Temple to offer these gifts of God to Him. It will be hard, O Rabbi, but shall I not perform my vow? It will be hard to part with them, I shall miss them much; but God

will not let blind Bartimæus suffer, since He will see that, in offering his two little doves and his lamb, he bringeth all that he hath."

With these words he moved on, the lamb, obeying the string which he held, walking slowly on before; while I could see tears trickle from the sightless eyes of the righteous son and pious father, as he kissed, and kissed again, the precious doves that lay in his bosom. This little occurrence made me sad; yet I honoured the resolute piety of this poor man, whose eyes, though they saw not men, seemed to see God and feel His presence. There is still humble piety in the land, my dear father, and if we find it not among the proud and high-minded priests, we must look for it in the hearts of poor and humble men like Bartimæus.

When we reached the gate, we were not detained by the Roman captain, who kept others, examining their passes, and taking gate-money from travellers who were without them; for though wayfarers on foot may pass in and out free, yet money is exacted from those who ride on horses or mules unless they have passes signed by the Procurator. But the captain of the gate no sooner saw us than, with great civility, he made us pass through the gate in advance of the others who were waiting, saying that the young centurion whose name, I think I have not told you, is Æmilius, had given him orders not to detain us. The stern, iron-cased Roman soldiers who stood about the gate struck me as having just the aspect and forms of men who could conquer the world. When I reflected that there was not a city on the earth at whose gates did not stand such men as these, armed, and clad, and bearded like them, I could not but respect, while I feared, the universal power of the Roman empire.

When we had passed the gates, the air blew fresh from the hills of olives, laden with fragrance. After being so long confined within walls and narrow streets, it seemed to me that I had just broken out of my cage, like the pretty blue-

headed turtle-dove, and I felt as though I could wing my way to the free deserts, if the wings of a dove, so ardently longed for by King David, had been given me. On our right, not far from the gate, Rabbi Amos pointed out to me the Pool of Bethesda; and turning my eyes towards it, I beheld a most touching spectacle. All the five porches were filled with sick and impotent folk, the lame, halt, blind, and withered, waiting, as my uncle told us, for the moving of the waters; for he said that at certain seasons God sends an angel down into the pool to trouble the water, and then, whosoever steps in first is made whole of whatsoever disease he may have. I stopped my mule to consider this remarkable congregation of miserable people, of whom there must have been no less than four hundred; some leaning, pale and haggard, against the columns; some creeping about in helplessness, trying to get nearer to the pool, from which the stronger thrust them back; some reclining patiently upon their beds, humbly waiting for God's time; and others being borne towards the pool on the shoulders of men. Suddenly, as I was about to ride on and turn from this painful sight, one of the most extraordinary scenes took place that human eyes could witness. The surface of the pool, which had hitherto been perfectly placid, all at once became agitated as if it were boiling, and began to swell and rush and sway from side to side in a remarkable manner. When this occurred, there arose from the throng of wretched cripples who crowded its steps a cry of four hundred voices, mingled shrieks of joy, shouts of wonder, and exclamations of amazement, while a simultaneous movement took place of the whole mass of human bodies, which became as wildly tossed to and fro as were the waters. Those nearest plunged madly in, while those behind rushed down, some wildly shrieking in their agonising haste, and some uttering the most fearful curses, as they found their way obstructed by the impenetrable masses before them. The weakest and most impotent, being

most eager, and being farthest off, made desperate exertions to gain the pool, howling and climbing with hands and feet over the backs of others, only to be hurled to the ground and trampled upon by those who were behind them. Some strong men, who tried to open a passage for one whom they were carrying, drew their knives, and proceeded to cut their way through the haggard and mouthing wretches who obstructed the path; which violence being seen by the Romans from the gate, some score of them went down, with drawn swords, to quell the tumult; for the whole pool was in an uproar. Unable to endure the dreadful scene, we rode rapidly on; but I afterwards heard that before quiet was restored several men were slain, and that five of those who had got into the pool were drowned beneath the feet of mad wretches, who recklessly leaped in upon them over the heads of others.

"Is it possible," I asked Rabbi Amos, after we had reached the borders of Kedron, "that the act of an angel can produce all this confusion, and such an outbreak of the worst of human passions?"

"There is no doubt that the troubling of the waters is a miracle," he answered. "The act of the angel is good. His touch gives to the water a healing power that cures diseases, and shall we ascribe to his benevolence these dreadful and hideous scenes which we have just witnessed?"

I was silent; but I sighed for the wickedness of man, that can turn even God's gifts into curses by his evil ways.

We now turned a little to the right, out of the highway; for as the bridge by which the road to Jericho is usually gained was being solidly rebuilt by the Romans, we were fain to follow the brook-side till we came near Absalom's Pillar, at the sight of which the whole history of that misguided young prince came before me. How wonderful that the glorious wealth of golden hair, whereof he was vain, and of which the poets of that day speak more than once, should have been the instrument of his death! As we journeyed onward

we passed by ancient oak trees, which the Rabbi said were old enough to have been a part of the extensive forest through which he rode so fatally. He showed me, after a while, at some distance from Jerusalem, the pit into which the ten young men who slew Absalom cast him, heaping great stones upon him. This prince must have been as brave as he was beautiful and disobedient, if, when hanging by his hair in the oak, and incapable of doing them harm, it required "ten young men to compass him and smite him." Or, possibly, as Rabbi Amos thinks, this number combined to take, together, the blame before King David, which no one of them dared to encounter alone. How interesting to me is every spot about Jerusalem! I seem to live in the ancient days, when I see the scenes where have been enacted the great events which constitute the history and the glory of our nation.

We had hardly reached the place where the two roads meet when we heard to the west the sound of the galloping of a large body of horse, and the next moment the young Roman centurion came in sight, by the road from the Horse Gate, riding at the head of a troop of horse, whose martial appearance, with the ringing of their armour and the stirring sound of their bugles, made my blood leap; and I am sure if I could have beheld my own eyes, I should have discovered in them a martial light. Æmilius looked like a prince, and his burnished breast-plate shone in the sun like armour of fire. At his side rode a youth who bore the eagle of his band; but the centurion himself carried in his hand only the badge of his rank, a vine-rod bound with rings of gold. He saluted us with that courtesy which distinguishes his every motion; then he divided his troop into two bodies, one of which, riding on, led the van, and the other, falling behind, served as a rear-guard. He then gave the word to move forward. The centurion himself rode either by the side of Rabbi Amos or near our bridles, but he did not so far occupy himself with

us as to forget his duty as captain, which he fulfilled with the utmost vigilance.

Farewell, dear father ; in my next letter I will resume my narrative of the events which have taken place since I left Jerusalem. May the God of our father Abraham be your defence and shield.

Your affectionate daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER VIII.

MY DEAR FATHER,

The favour wherewith you have received my communications respecting the wonderful prophet who now draweth all Judea after him into the wilderness, and the assurance that I can obtain from your wisdom, learning, and piety a solution of all difficulties and a true guide to the truth, prompt me to continue freely, and in detail, the relation of events that have happened of late. In my accounts of the marvellous occurrences that I have witnessed, and may yet witness, I shall convey to you the impressions made not only upon my own mind, but upon the minds of many others—upon the minds of the wise, the learned, and the great, who also have heard and seen these things. Thus you will have the weight of many testimonies, which you will doubtless hold in respect in proportion to the dignity, and wisdom, and rank of the witnesses.

My last letter ended with an account of the Roman escort, under the command of the young Roman centurion, who, as I have before written to you, courteously proffered its protection to our little party. The day was yet early, the sun had risen but an hour and a half above the mountains of

Moab, and the air was of that buoyant and agreeable elasticity which seems to me one of the peculiar blessings of this holy land of our fathers. In Egypt there is in the torrid air, at this season, a want of life that we do not here experience; and, as I rode onward, methought I would gladly mount the Arab steed of the desert, and fly across the sandy seas of Edom with the fleetness which amazes me whenever I see the children of the desert ride. A band of thirty came boldly near us from a gorge, as we approached Bethany, and after watching us a few moments, scoured away like the wind into the fastnesses of the hills, as a detachment of a score of our Roman escort was ordered to gallop towards them. Upon this Rabbi Amos said that we were fortunate in having such strong protection, for this party of the children of Esau would otherwise have attacked and plundered us, as they are wont to rob every party of Israelites they fall in with; and the recent concourse of so many people to Jordan has drawn them, says the centurion, with great boldness, and in great numbers, close to the walls of Jerusalem, to lay in wait for and plunder them. Thus, the hostility which began between the patriarch Jacob and the patriarch Esau has never yet been healed, but rankles in the bosoms of their descendants even to this day, and still "Esau hateth Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him." The Romans greatly admired the horsemanship of these children of Esau; and upon their heavy horses, weighted with their iron armour, it would have been vain to have followed these Arabs to their retreats.

We shortly afterwards reached the summit of the ridge above Bethany, from which eminence, before we went down into the village, we had a gorgeous view of the Holy City of God, with its lofty Temple glittering in the sunbeams like a mountain of fashioned silver. The Tower of Antonia darkly contrasted with its splendour, and the Citadel of David frowned from heavy walls with a warlike majesty that deeply

impressed me. Ah ! how could I gaze upon the scene, my dear father, without emotions of awe, wonder, adoration, and gratitude ? I drew rein, and entreated Rabbi Amos to delay while I surveyed Jerusalem, which, familiar as it might be to him and to all the rest of our cavalcade, was new to me from this point ; but he had ridden too far onward to hear me, for I had already been lingering for some moments ; and the centurion, riding up to my side, stopped respectfully with a portion of his troop, and said he would await my leisure. I could not but thank him for his kindness, and then, turning towards the city, I was soon lost to all else in contemplation of it. Irresistibly, as I gazed, memory flew backward to the time when our father Abraham was met before its gates by Melchizedek, its king, who received regal homage from him. Then I seemed to behold David coming forth from its lofty portals, at the head of armies, to conquer the surrounding nations. I fancied the splendid trains of Oriental monarchs, of the kings of the South, and the kings of the North, and the Queen of Sheba, of happy Arabia, winding through its pleasant valley, and entering in to prostrate themselves before Solomon, the prince mighty in glory and power, the fame of whose wisdom and greatness filled the whole earth. Alas ! the whole earth is now filled with the story of the shame and bondage of Israel ! But the day cometh, dear father, when she shall lift up her face from the dust, and put on regal garments, and God shall place a crown upon her head, and of her glory and dominion shall be no end. This hope quenched the tears that burst into mine eyes as I contrasted the present with the past. In memory, as I continued to gaze, I saw the armies of the Assyrians and of the Chaldeans, the armies of Egypt, and of Persia, and of Greece, all, each in its turn, encompassing the holy city, and conquering it, even though God dwelt therein, in the mysterious fire of the Shekinah. But Jehovah will not save a city or a heart from its foes, if the city or the heart be not with God ; and we know from

the prophets that the hearts of our fathers were far from God, and therefore were they delivered up to their enemies to be scourged. Oh, my dear father, that our people of to-day would learn the fearful lesson that the past can teach them !

"You should see Rome," said the young centurion, who had watched my emotion with evident surprise. "It is a city of unequalled grandeur. It covers six times more space than this city, and it contains three hundred and sixty-five temples, while Jerusalem hath but one !"

"There is no God but ONE," I answered, impressively.

"We believe that there is one God, who is the Father of a great multitude of lesser gods, and to each we erect a temple," he said, firmly yet respectfully.

Upon this, touched with pity that one so noble in mind and person should be so far from the truth, I began to show him from the prophets that God is ONE, and that all things were made by Him ; but he, plucking a blossom from a tree which was within reach, replied—

"It is beneath the dignity of the Father of the gods, the great Jove, to descend to make a flower like this, or to shape a crystal, or to colour the ruby, or create that golden-dyed bird which flutters among yonder fragrant blossoms. He made the sun and moon, the stars and the earth, but left the lesser works to minor deities. Talk to me of thy One God, maiden, and prove to me that He made all things, and is ONE, and thy God shall be my God."

It was then no time for me to endeavour to combat these errors ; but I have reserved to myself the first convenient opportunity to instruct this centurion in the truth as it is revealed from heaven to our favoured people. He has already manifested an inquiring spirit touching our holy faith, and Rabbi Amos has taught him many things from the books of Moses ; but this has sufficed only to make him desire to know more, not to eradicate from his heart his heathen superstitions. The gentleness of his nature, his sound judgment,

the frankness of his character, the ingenuous temper of the whole man, inspire me with great hope that he will ultimately be convinced of his errors and embrace the faith of Israel.

We now rode forward through the street of Bethany, and soon came to the house of your former friend, Rabbi Abel, who died many years ago at Alexandria, when he went there with merchandise, and concerning the welfare of whose children you desired me to ask. They are now grown to the full estate of manhood and womanhood, and still dwell at Bethany. As they are friends of my cousin Mary, it was decided that we should tarry with them to rest half an hour before proceeding on our way. It was a plain and humble dwelling before which Rabbi Amos assisted me to alight, but there was an air of neatness and sweet domestic peace about it that at once came home to my heart, and made me love the place even before I had seen the inmates, who were within the house welcoming my cousin ; but on hearing also of my arrival, there came out a fair young girl of twenty-two, with a face full of love and welcome. She approached me with mingled respect and kindness, and embraced me, while Rabbi Amos pronounced our names. I felt immediately as if I were in a sister's arms, and knew that I should love her always. Next came forth a young man of about thirty years of age, with a countenance of a noble cast, full of wisdom and good-will. He looked pale and habitually thoughtful, but a fine friendly light beamed in his handsome dark eyes as he extended his hand to welcome me. You have already received a full account of him and of his character in one of my former letters, and need not to be told that this was Lazarus, the son of your friend. At the threshold, Martha, the elder sister, met me, but with more ceremony, and made an apology for receiving into so lowly a dwelling one whom she termed the rich heiress of Alexandria ; but I embraced her so affectionately that this feeling at once passed away. I was much struck with this whole family : each member of it

possessed some separate attraction, and in the three I seemed to have found two sisters and a brother. Martha busied herself at once to prepare food for us, and soon set before us a frugal but neat repast—more, however, than we desired, for we all insisted that we needed nothing, as we had not been long in the saddle. Mary and Lazarus in the meanwhile sat on either side of me, and asked me many questions concerning Alexandria, and especially if I had ever seen their father's tomb; and when I told them that at my father's request I had kept the flowers fresh around it, they both pressed my hands, and thanked me so gratefully, that tears in my own eyes answered to the emotion in theirs.

How shall I describe to you the loveliness of the face of Mary? And yet her beauty lieth not so much in the perfection of features as in the soul which animates them and lends them a charm which I cannot convey in words. Her eyes are of that remarkable colour so seldom seen among our people—of that mild blue which, when found, is of a richer and more cerulean tone than is possessed by the azure-eyed natives of the North. Mary's eyes are as blue as the skies of Judea, and yet possess all the starry, torrid splendour of the eyes of Hebrew maidens. Her hair, of a soft, golden-brown colour, is worn knotted in wavy masses about her finely-moulded neck. Her air is serene and confiding, and she is so little versed in concealment that she lets you read all the secrets of her pure soul in the sweet eyes I have spoken of. There is an indescribable pensiveness about her that is most touching and at the same time pleasing.

Martha, the elder sister, is of a more lively disposition, yet more commanding in her aspect, for she is taller, and almost queenly in her mien. Her eyes and her hair are black; the eyes mild, and beaming with intelligence, like those of her brother Lazarus, whom she closely resembles. She has a winning voice, and a manner that invites strong confidence in her friendship. She seemed to take the whole manage-

ment of our entertainment upon herself,—a duty which the quieter Mary left to her as a matter of course, preferring rather to talk with me concerning the land of Egypt, where our fathers were so long in bondage, and which all our young people in Judea invest with imaginary terrors. Mary asked me if I was not afraid to dwell there; if I ever saw the tomb of the Pharaohs; and if the seventy pyramids of Nilus were the work of our forefathers, or had withstood the Flood, like the everlasting hills. Lazarus conversed chiefly with Rabbi Amos, who questioned him with much interest concerning the prophet John of the wilderness, to whom, you will remember I wrote you, Lazarus had paid a visit. After our repast, Martha showed me three beautiful bands of embroidery, which she was working for the new veil of the Temple to be put up next year; for the sisters live by working needlework for the Temple, and Lazarus makes copies of the law and the psalms for the priests. He showed me his copying-table, and the rolls of parchment upon it, some partly inscribed with beautiful characters, some quite complete. He also showed me a roll of the book of Isaiah, which he had just finished, and which had occupied him one hundred and seven days. It was exquisitely written. An incomplete copy was thrown aside, and was destined to be burned, because Lazarus had made a mistake in forming one letter; for if an *iota* too much be added, the work is condemned by the priests and burned, so strict are they that none but perfect and immaculate copies of the law shall exist. Mary also showed me a beautifully embroidered foot-tablet, which the wife of Pilate had ordered for herself when she came last from Cæsarea.

“I shall not receive coin for it,” said Mary, “but shall present it to her, for she has ever been very kind to us; and when, last year, she and the Procurator Pilate, her lord, came up from Cæsarea to Jerusalem, about the time of the Pass-over she sent her own household physician to heal Lazarus,

who was sick from over-much labour. She knew us only by inquiring who it was that worked the embroidery of the altar mantles, which she had somewhere seen and much admired before they were placed in the Temple."

Seeing upon the table a richly worked book-cover of silk and velvet, with the letters "I.N." embroidered in olive-leaves thereon, I asked her if that, being so elegant, was not for the High Priest.

"No," answered Martha, with brightening eyes, before her sister could reply, "that is for our friend, and the friend and brother of Lazarus."

"What is his name?" I asked.

"Jesus, of Nazareth."

"I have heard John speak of this man," said my cousin Mary with animation; and appealing to me, she reminded me how John had repeated what Lazarus had spoken to him of his friend from Nazareth, which I have written to you. "I should rejoice," added my cousin, "to know him also."

"And from the report I have heard of him," said I, "it would indeed be pleasant to see him."

The two sisters listened to us with visible interest, and Martha said—

"Had you been here a few days ago, you would have seen him. He left us, after abiding with us three weeks, to return to Nazareth. But he requested Lazarus to meet him at Bethabara, on the third day from this, for some important reason; and my brother will go, for he loves him so that he would cross the seas to behold him."

"Then," said Rabbi Amos to Lazarus, "if you are to journey so soon towards Jordan to meet your friend, you had best join our company and share our escort."

To this, after some consultation with his sisters, Lazarus consented.

What a blessed family, thought I, is this! The sisters happy in each other's love, the brother happy in theirs, all

three united as one in the purest affection,—and a fourth added to the circle, whose love for the three is equal to theirs for him! Humble in station are they, poor, and dependent upon the labour of their hands for their daily bread, yet their household is one that kings might envy, and hath a peace in it which gold nor jewels could purchase.

I left this blessed abode of fraternal friendship with regret, and felt that I should be perfectly happy if I could be admitted as a fifth link in the chain of their mutual love. Even the Roman centurion had been struck with the air of peaceful repose that reigned here, and spoke of it to me with enthusiasm as we rode away.

About noon we stopped at a caravanserai midway between Jericho and Bethany. Here we overtook a friend of Rabbi Amos, the wise and learned scholar and lawyer, Gamaliel. He was, he told us, also riding to Jordan, to have an interview with the prophet, being persuaded to seek it on account of a dream he had had, which he repeated to his friend Rabbi Amos, but not in our hearing. The effect of the narrative upon my uncle excited my curiosity to know what it was, but he kept silence upon the subject. Accompanying the lawyer Gamaliel was a young man who was his disciple, and who journeyed with him as a companion by the way. His name is Saul; and I marked him particularly, because I overheard the venerable lawyer speak of him as the most remarkable young man who ever sat at his feet to learn the mysteries of the law. This young law-disciple and Lazarus rode together, and talked long and earnestly by the way, the former thinking that nothing but mischief would come of the new prophet's preaching, while the latter warmly defended his preaching as divine. The Roman centurion listened to their converse with the closest attention; for Saul was learned in the prophets, and drew richly from their stores to prove that the true Messias can never be heralded by so lowly a messenger as this preacher of the wilderness. Saul eloquently drew a

gorgeous picture of Messias' coming and the splendour of His reign, and declared that angels and heavenly signs, and not a wild man of the desert preaching baptism by water, should prepare the way before Him.

At length, as the day closed, we came in sight of the walls and towers of Jericho ; but we could not reach the gates until after they were closed. The arrival of the young centurion caused them to be immediately reopened, and we were admitted, with some hundreds who, having reached the gates after they were shut, now begged and received permission to enter in our company.

The next day we proceeded to Gilgal alone, the road now being perfectly safe. The courteous Roman had early the same morning issued from the gates, in haste to pursue the famous Barabbas, who had in the night attacked a caravan within four leagues of Jordan, and taken much booty, and slain many men.

I now write to thee beneath the roof of the country house of Rabbi Amos. "To-morrow early," says a passage which I copy from my journal, "we are going to Bethabara, a little village beyond Jordan, but situated on its banks, near which we learn John is now baptising, he being no longer at the ford of Jordan, where my cousin Mary's betrothed, John, found him, and was baptised by him a few weeks ago. Lazarus has gone on with Saul and the learned Gamaliel, with many lawyers and doctors in their company, who desire to see and hear this prophet of the wilderness."

In truth, dear father, the advent of a prophet is so strange an occurrence among us that the bare idea that John the Baptist may be a true prophet of God has moved the great heart of Israel, and stirred up eagerness, hope, and marvel, in the highest degree ever known in the land. There seems to be but one speech and but one thought. Every man says to his neighbour, "Hast thou seen or heard the new prophet? Is he Messias, or is he Elias?"

My next letter will give you a narration of what I witnessed at Bethabara, and will, perhaps, more deeply interest you than anything I have yet written.

May the hope of Israel not be long deferred, and may we receive the Messias, when He cometh, in humble faith, in honour, and in love.

Your affectionate daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER IX.

MY DEAR FATHER,

In these letters to you, which give an account of my excursion with Rabbi Amos to the Jordan, I beseech you pardon the details into which I enter, for it is my earnest desire that you should see everything with my eyes, as if you had been present with me; that you may, though absent, be able to judge, as if you had been an eye-witness, of the remarkable events whereof I have undertaken to give you a complete history. I know that your generous mind, and your sense of equity and justice, will lead you to read all I have to write, before you make a reply to the facts which, with filial love and reverence, I present to your consideration.

After Rabbi Amos had reached the house in the wheat-fields of Gilgal, where he intended to sojourn during the weeks of harvest, and had directed his servants what to do, he kindly told us that he was ready to accompany my cousin Mary and myself to the Jordan, to hear the prophet. It was with no small rejoicing, therefore, that my cousin and I once more mounted our mules, and proceeded towards the place where men told us the great prophet was baptising. But we had not ridden a great way from the house when we overtook two men

on foot, with staves in their hands and wallets upon their shoulders. As we passed, one of them bowed with reverence to Rabbi Amos, who, from his rank as a priest and his venerable appearance, always commands the homage of all men.

"Whither goest thou in such haste, friend Matthew?" said Rabbi Amos, returning the man's salutation, for he seemed to know him. "Canst thou leave thy tax-gathering in these busy times to go forth into the wilderness?"

The traveller, who was a man of stout figure, with dark hair and beard, and a look of great intelligence, but whose costume was plain and ill kept, smiled and answered—

"If a man would find the payers of tribute nowadays, good master, he must not stay at home, forsooth, but go forth into the wilderness of Jordan, whither all men have gone. Verily, this new prophet emptieth our towns; and we publicans must remain idle at the seat of custom, or go forth with the stream."

"Thy words are those of truth, friend Matthew," answered my uncle; "but hast thou no other motive in thy heart, in taking this journey from Jericho, than looking after thy Roman coins?"

"I would fain see a man to whom multitudes resort from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from all Judea, and from beyond Jordan."

"And thinkest thou," said my uncle, as the two men walked on by the side of his mule, "thinkest thou this man is a true son of the prophets?"

"He works no miracles; unless, indeed, the power of his preaching be a miracle," answered Matthew.

"This man is an impostor. There can be no prophet unless he prove his mission by miracles," suddenly cried the second traveller, the companion of Matthew, speaking in a harsh and displeasing voice. Now, neither Mary nor I had liked the face of this man from the first. He was little of stature and ill-featured, and his attire was mean; but he had a suspicious air,

combined with a fawning deference to Rabbi Amos, that made me think he must be a hypocrite. He smiled with his mouth and teeth, but at the same time his eyes looked sinister. An air of humility appeared to me to be put on to conceal the real pride and wickedness of his character. He seemed a man who could artfully deceive to gain his selfish ends, and who would kneel to a man to betray him. The sound of his voice confirmed my first impression of him. Rabbi Amos fixed his eyes upon him as if he did not like the manner of his breaking in upon the conversation.

"What is thy companion's name, friend Matthew?" he asked, as the other walked on.

"His name is Judas, called Iscariot. He hath been hired by me to bear the moneys I collect in the country villages; and as we must gather taxes both at Gilgal and Bethabara, he journeyeth with me."

We now came in sight of the Jordan, but could discover no crowd upon its banks. While we wondered at not beholding any signs of the multitude, we met a stranger who was riding a horse, and coming from the northward, who, seeing us apparently in perplexity, inquired with courtesy if we sought John the prophet. Rabbi Amos replied that this was so, and the horseman informed us that the prophet had removed up the river some two hours' ride, and was then baptising near the little village of Bethabara, on the east bank of Jordan; and he added that not less than eight thousand people thronged the shores.

"Dost thou know this stranger?" Rabbi Amos asked of Matthew, after he had gratefully thanked the horseman for his intelligence, looking back after him as he rode on. "I saw thee salute him."

"He is an officer of Herod the Tetrarch's household," was the response, "a Hebrew of great wealth; and he payeth more tribute-money to the Emperor from his lands than any Israelite between Jericho and Jerusalem."

At length, dear father, after hastening our mules, and riding pleasantly for two hours along the verdant banks of Jordan, we came in view of a square tower of stone, peering above the trees, which marked the site of the village of Bethabara.

"That tower," said Rabbi Amos, "stands over a cave in which Elijah long dwelt, and in which Isaiah at one time concealed himself from his enemies. It is now called the Tower of Elijah. From the summit of yonder hill, to the left, the prophet was caught up, and ascended to heaven in the chariot of fire; and near where you see the single rock, Elisha divided Jordan with the mantle that fell upon him from the ascending prophet of God."

All these places, with many others which the learned Rabbi Amos pointed out to us, were very interesting to me; for nothing commands my attention so completely as allusions to the scenes of the olden days of the prophets and kings of Israel. While my eyes were fixed upon the hill, and my imagination presented to me Elijah standing upon the chariot of heaven, disappearing amid the clouds, we came to an opening in the wood before us, and all at once we beheld a scene that made my heart stand still, it was so new and wonderful. Near that place the winding river takes a broad curve, and the opposite village of Bethabara lies in the hollow, forming the centre of half a circle. This widely curving shore was alive with human heads. Not a place could be seen where some man or woman did not stand. And of this vast multitude every eye was concentrated upon the prophet, as from the crescent tiers of the amphitheatre in Alexandria the gaze of all is fixed upon the scenes passing in the arena. He was standing near the opposite shore—for the Jordan here is very narrow, and can be forded—in the water, preaching to the countless assembly that stood half encircling him. Near him, behind, and on either side upon the bank, sat his disciples, at least a hundred in number, chiefly young men.

Behind them rose the Tower of Elijah, and farther from the shore lay the sweet village of Bethabara, with its green gardens and snow-white walls.

The clear voice of the youthful prophet of the wilderness fell distinctly on our ears, such silence was kept by the vast audience. We could not approach very near on our mules; therefore, dismounting at the outskirts of the throng, we left them with the two servants, and on foot drew near to the place where the prophet stood. Many of the people, recognising Rabbi Amos, respectfully made way for him; so that at length we stood directly opposite the speaker, and could hear every word he uttered. With surprise I saw John, the cousin of Mary, standing close to the prophet, and listening with the deepest and most reverent attention. The subject of the prophet's discourse was his usual message of the coming of the Messias. Oh that I could give you, my dear father, the faintest idea of the power and eloquence of his language!

"There is no remission of sin without shedding of blood," he was saying, earnestly, "The baptism of water with which I baptise you is unto repentance; but blood must be out-poured ere sin can be washed away! Do you ask me if the blood of bulls and goats doth not take away sin? I answer and say unto you, that the Lord hath said He delighteth not in these rivers of blood."

"Wherefore, then, great prophet," asked one of the chief Levites, who stood near him, "wherefore, then, are the sacrifices ordained by the law of Moses—wherefore, then, the altar in the Temple, and the daily sacrifice of the lamb?"

"Wherefore?" repeated the prophet, with his eyes beaming with the earnest light of inspiration—"wherefore but as types and shadows of the real and true Sacrifice appointed by God from the foundation of the world! Think ye a man can slay the lamb of his flock for the sin of his soul? If God demands thy life, shall He accept the life of a brute? Ye men

of Israel, the day has come when your eyes shall be opened. The hour is at hand when the true meaning of the daily sacrifice shall be understood. Lo! the Messiah cometh, and ye shall see and believe!"

There now came towards him several persons who desired baptism. While he was baptising these men and women, I saw appear, on the little mound near the tower from which Rabbi Amos had said Elijah ascended, Lazarus, the brother of Martha, accompanied by a man of about his own years, of an indescribable dignity and grace of aspect, combined with an air of benevolence and peace that at once attracted me.

"It must be the friend of Lazarus," said Mary to me; for she also had discovered him. "See with what calm serenity he gazes upon the multitude, yet retiring in his manner, as if he shrank from the common eye!"

He was wrapped in a vesture of dark blue cloth, which was folded about his form; his head was bare, and his hair flowed down about his shoulders after the fashion of the Nazarenes. He seemed so unlike all other men, in a certain majesty united with sweetness that marked his whole air, that I could not withdraw my gaze from him.

The prophet at the same moment fixed his eyes upon this man, and as he did so I saw a change come over his face as if he had seen an angel. His eyes shone with unearthly brilliancy; his lips parted as if he would speak, yet had lost the power; and then, with his right hand stretched forth towards the noble stranger, he stood for a moment like a statue. All eyes followed the direction of his, and of his stretched-out arm. Suddenly—and oh, how like the trumpet of Horeb his voice rang out!—he exclaimed—

"Behold!"

There was not a face in that vast multitude that was not directed towards the little eminence where Lazarus, evidently amazed at the attitude and words of the prophet and the gaze of the multitude, stood by his friend.

"Ye have asked wherefore is slain the daily lamb," continued the prophet. "The day *has come* when the sacrifice of the lamb, which can take away no sin, shall *cease*. Behold!" and here he stretched forth both arms towards the dignified stranger: "behold Him who taketh away the transgressions of men! He it is who, coming after me, is preferred before me. He it is to whom I bear witness, as the Messiah, the Son of the Highest! There stands the Christ of God! the only true Lamb, whose blood can wash away the iniquities of us all! He hath dwelt among you—He hath walked your streets—He hath sat in your homes, and I knew Him not—but I now behold on Him the sign of the Messiah, and therefore know I that it is He who is to redeem Israel!"

When the prophet had thus spoken in a voice that thrilled every heart, we beheld the august stranger advance towards him. He moved on alone. Lazarus had fallen prostrate on his face when he heard proclaimed that it was the Messiah with whom he had walked on terms of friendship. As He continued to come forward all was expectation in the immense multitude! The mass of heads swayed this way and that to get a sight of His face, which I could see was serene, but pale and earnest. John, the cousin of Mary, seeing Him approach, knelt humbly, and bowed his head in reverential awe and love. Those who stood between him and the prophet, moved involuntarily aside, and left an open path for Him to the water-side. He walked at a slow and even pace, an air of humility veiling the native dignity of His kingly port.

The prophet, on seeing Him come near, regarded Him, as it seemed to me, with far more awe than all the others.

"What wouldst Thou with Thy servant, O Messiah, Prophet of God, mighty to save?" he said, in tremulous tones, as the stranger came some paces down into the water towards him.

"To be baptised of thee," answered the Christ, in a calm, quiet voice, that was heard to the remotest bounds of the

crowd. Never, oh, never shall I forget the sound of that voice, as it fell upon my ears !

"I have need to be baptised of *Thee*, and comest Thou to me?" answered the prophet, with the lowliest humility and awe, and with looks expressive of his amazement.

"It becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," answered Messias, mildly ; and when He had said this, the prophet, though still as one who doubted, and with the holiest reverence, administered unto Him, in the sight of all the people, the baptism which he had administered to his own disciples.

And now, my dear father, I have to relate the most wondrous thing that ever came to pass in Israel since the law was given from Sinai. It must be clear to you that this event bears unquestionable testimony that Jesus of Nazareth, the noble stranger baptised in Jordan, and to whom John bore witness, is truly Messias the Son of God.

When the baptised stranger went up out of the water, there was heard above all our heads, a noise as of rolling thunder, although the sky was cloudless ; and when in great fear we looked up, we beheld a dazzling glory, far brighter than the sun ; and from the midst of this celestial splendour there darted a ray of light which descended and hovered upon the head of the Christ. Some of the people said it thundered, and others that it lightened ; but judge the amazement and admiration of all, and the dread awe that shook every soul, when, amid the glory above His head, was seen the form of a dove of fire, with outspread wings overshadowing Him ; and from the heavens the voice which was supposed to be thunder shaped itself into language, and uttered these words in the hearing of every ear :

"THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED."

On hearing these words from the skies, a great part of the multitude fell on their faces. Every cheek was pale, and each man gazed on his neighbour in wonder and in fear.

When the majestic, terrible voice had given utterance to these words, the light disappeared, the dove reascended to the skies and was lost to the sight, leaving a halo of divine glory resting upon the head of this "Son of God." He alone seemed unmoved and calm amid this awful scene ; and going up the river bank, disappeared mysteriously and suddenly from my earnest gaze. At length, when men came to themselves, and would have gazed on Him whom all now knew to be the Christ, none could find Him : He had withdrawn Himself from their homage.

Your affectionate

ADINA.

LETTER X.

MY DEAR FATHER,

I will commence this letter by asking you calmly to read my preceding epistle, and entreating you not to let any prejudice unworthy of the wisdom and justice by which you are distinguished among men, lead you to reject, without examination, the events which have formed the subject of my recent letters to you, and to close your mind against the convictions to which they may give rise. I beseech you, my honoured and beloved father, to consider and weigh the things of which I have written—the preaching of John, and his baptism of Jesus, whom, before ten thousand people, he declared to be Messias, to whom he bore witness—and the voice of God, as audible in the ears of all as that which shook Horeb and Sinai, proclaiming from heaven that He was "His beloved Son !" Think of all this, and ask yourself seriously, "Is not this the Christ ?"

This question need not pass far on its way ere it finds a

response from *my* lips and heart : " Yes, He is the Christ, and I will believe in Him."

I can see your face, my dear father, lose its expression of mild benignity, as you read this confession from my pen. I can see you look both displeased and grieved. But you have no reason to fear that I shall do or believe aught that will bring sorrow on your grey hairs or on your name. If thou art a Jew, and proud of being descended from the lineage of the patriarchs who walked with the Lord, I also am a daughter of Israel, proud of my nation and of my faith. In believing Jesus of Nazareth to be the Messiah of God, I do not make myself less a Jewess. Indeed without believing it, my dear father, I could not be a Jewess worthily. Has not the Messiah of our nation been the subject of Judah's prayer and of Israel's hope for ages? Is it not the belief that Messiah cometh that hath ever upheld the Jewish race? Do the Gentiles look for the Christ? If they do not, and if we alone look for Him, and every mother in Israel hopes tremblingly, with joy and doubt, that He may be found in her first-born son, am I less a Jewess, or rather am I not a true Jewess, when I believe Jesus to be the Messiah, seeing in Him all that a Messiah could bring, even the voice of God, in testimony of His mission? But I verily trust, my dear father, that I am defending my belief without cause, and that when you come to read and compare, and examine diligently, you will rejoice with me that God hath remembered Israel, and that He is about to take away her reproach among the nations.

I shall wait for your next parcel of letters with the deepest solicitude, that I may know your decision in reference to these wondrous things which are coming to pass. You will not hear them only from my letters, dear father; for the report of these marvels is noised abroad over the land; and the men who witnessed the baptism of Jesus will doubtless report in Egypt what took place, especially speaking of the

voice of God rolling like words of thunder along the cloudless sky, and the descent of the fiery dove upon the head of the new prophet. Merchants of Damascus and Cairo were there, having their trains of camels a little way off, and Arab horsemen sat in their saddles on the outside of the crowd; while Roman soldiers, strangers from Persia and Edom, and even the merchants from Media, with numerous others, Gentiles as well as Jews, were seen mingled with the multitude. This thing, therefore, was not done in a corner. The voice I plainly heard, and understood every word it said! It seemed to me to come from the far blue depths of heaven at an immeasurable distance, but spoke with the clearness of a trumpet and the sonorous majesty of thunder. The light which descended was the most dazzling that human eyes ever encountered; and though when descending with the swiftness of lightning it seemed like a lance of fire, yet, upon reaching the sacred head of Jesus, as He came forth from out the water, it changed, as I before stated, to the shape of a dove, and, resting upon Him, overshadowed Him with its wings of light, and cast over Him a glittering splendour like the radiance of the sun. This lasted for a full minute, so that all eyes beheld it, and then followed the voice from the skies. The brilliancy of the light from the heavenly dove was so resplendent that I could not gaze on it, and when I looked again it had disappeared; but a cloud of softened lustre shone still around the head of Jesus, and His face, like that of Moses, burned with rays of glory. While thousands either stood amazed, or fell upon their faces in adoration and fear, He withdrew Himself from the multitude, none knew how save two persons whose eyes never wandered from Him. These were John, the cousin of Mary, and Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha.

When they had recovered a little from their amazement and awe, the people looked for Him, and inquired whither He had gone; some gazing into the water, some towards the

wilderness, some even looking upwards into heaven, as, indeed, I did likewise, as if we expected to behold Him ascending upon a chariot of dazzling clouds towards the throne of the mighty Jehovah, who had acknowledged Him to be His Son. The general belief was, that He had been translated to heaven; and some wept that a prophet had been sent, to be taken from them so soon; while others rejoiced that the Lord had not forgotten to be gracious unto the house of Israel; some doubted, and spoke of magic and sorcery; and others, who were surely filled with their own wickedness, mocked, and said the voice was thunder, and the brightness lightning. But here they were gainsaid, for hundreds cried, "There is no cloud in the sky; whence, then, could come thunder and lightning?" But the majority believed, and rejoiced greatly at what they had seen and heard. The prophet John of Jordan appeared to me to be more amazed at these things than any of his hearers. He looked constantly around for Jesus; and then, with his hands clasped together and uplifted, gazed heavenward, as if satisfied, with the thousands around him, that He whom he had baptised had been received up into heaven.

The wonder which the sudden disappearance of Jesus had produced, led to a general dispersion of the multitude, who wandered away in all directions, some to seek for Him, some to spread abroad the news of what they had seen, and all forgetting John the Baptist, whom they had hitherto followed, in the greater splendour of the new prophet, whose advent had been so marvellously attested by the descent of fire and a voice from the sky.

Rabbi Amos remained standing with our party near the water, for he did not wish us to be lost in the retiring throngs, and he also desired to speak with John, who stood alone in the midst of the water, at the spot where he had baptised Jesus. Not one of his disciples remained with him. Rabbi Amos drew near, and said to him—

"Holy prophet, knowest thou this man, if man he may be called, who has even now been baptised by thee?"

The prophet, whose eyes had been steadfastly raised all the time, bent his looks with tearful tenderness upon Rabbi Amos, and said mournfully—

"This is He of whom I spake—After me cometh a man which is preferred before me, for He was before me. And I knew Him not; but He that sent me to baptise with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on Him, the same is He that baptiseth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw the Spirit descending like a dove, and I saw and bear record that this is the Son of God."

"And whither, O holy prophet of Jordan," asked Rabbi Amos, with deep and sacred interest, "whither hath He departed?"

"That I know not. He must increase and I must decrease, whether He remaineth on earth or has been taken up into heaven. My mission is now well-nigh accomplished, for He to whom I have borne witness is come."

"And is He come to depart so soon for ever?" I asked, with deep interest; "shall we behold Him no more?"

"The hidden things belong to God. I know not whence He came nor whither He has gone: for I knew Him not in all His glory, but only as a prophet and son of man, until the Spirit descended and abode upon Him. Ye have heard my testimony that this is the very Messiah, the Christ, the Son of God."

Thus he spake, and turned and walked out of the water on the side towards Bethabara, and disappeared among the trees that fringed the bank. I now looked in the face of Rabbi Amos, to whose arm Mary was tearfully clinging, still under the influence of the terror which the scenes she had witnessed had produced in her soul. The Rabbi seemed grave and thoughtful. I said—

"Uncle, dost thou believe all that thou hast seen and heard?"

"I know not what to say," he answered, "save that the things which I have beheld this day are evidences that God hath not forgotten His people Israel."

He spoke no more. We left the banks of Jordan in silence and awe, and mounting our mules, which the two Gibeonite slaves in waiting held for us under a palm tree not far off, we returned towards my uncle's house at Gilgal. On the way we constantly passed crowds of people, some riding and others walking: all were talking of the wonderful things which had been done at the river. The thought of all hearts seemed to be that Jesus had gone up into heaven after He was baptised.

But, my dear father, it is with deep joy I am able to tell you that this wonderful man is still on the earth, and without doubt permitted to remain thereon for some great purpose. I have stated that my cousin John, and Lazarus, the secretary of the Scribes, had kept their eyes fixed upon Him from the first, and that they had seen Him pass down the river, where some projecting and overhanging trees hid Him at once from view. Though they often lost sight of Him, they yet followed Him by the print of His sandals in the wet sand of the shore, and at length came in view of Him, as He was leaving the river bank and going towards the desert, between two low hills which had hidden Him from their eyes. But one of the young men said to the other, while both burned with wonder and with love,

"Let us not fail to overtake Him, and follow Him whithersoever He may go. With Him must be the well of life, for He is indeed highly favoured of God."

So they went on; but though they moved forward rapidly, they next saw Him far distant, crossing the desert plain that stretches southward towards Jericho and the waste. They ran very swiftly, and at length, coming near him, called,

"Master, good Master, tarry for us, for we would follow and learn of Thee!"

He stopped and turned upon them a visage so pale, so stricken with sadness and with anguish, that they both stood still and gazed upon Him with amazement at beholding such a change. The glory of His beauty had passed away, and the beaming splendour which had shone from His countenance was gone. The look of unutterable sorrow that remained pierced them to the heart. Lazarus, who had been so long His bosom friend, wept aloud.

"Weep not! Ye shall see me another day, my friends," He said. "I go now to the wilderness, obedient to the Spirit which guideth me thither. Ye shall, after a time, behold me again. It is expedient for you that I go whither I go."

"Nay, but we will go with thee," cried Lazarus, earnestly. "If Thou art to endure evil, we will be with Thee."

"There must be none to help; there must be none to uphold," He said, firmly but sadly. "I must tread the wine-press of temptation alone!"

He then left them, waving His hand that they might go back. They obeyed sorrowfully, wondering what His words meant, and wherefore it was needful for Him to go into the desert, where certain mysterious trials seemed to await Him; and they marvelled most of all at the change in His countenance, which, from being lustrous with celestial light, was now, said Lazarus, "marred more than the sons of men." From time to time the two young men looked backward to watch the receding figure of the Christ, till they no longer beheld Him in the distance of the desert, towards the stony solitudes whereto He steadfastly kept His face.

The two friends came on to the house of Rabbi Amos at Gilgal the same night, and there Lazarus made known to us what I have now written. It moved us all deeply, and we sat together late at night within the porch under the fig trees,

talking of Jesus, and of the things that we had seen concerning Him that day : and though we all rejoiced greatly that He was still on earth, we wept to think that he was driven by some destiny, unknown and unfathomable by us, to dwell alone in the wilderness.

Oh, my dear father, how wonderful is all this! That a great prophet is amongst us cannot be denied. The star of John the Baptist's fame dwindles into a spark before the glory of this Son of God. That He will draw all men unto Him, even into the wilderness, cannot be questioned, if He takes up His abode there. But now all is mystery, awe, wonder, and expectation. No one has fixed upon any judgment concerning what the end of these things will be. Rabbi Amos advises all to wait patiently the issue, for if God has sent a prophet, that prophet must have a mission, which, in due time, He will come forth from the wilderness to fulfil. In my next letter I may be able to write you something further touching those things which yet remain hidden in mystery. May the God of our fathers' house come forth indeed from the heavens, for the salvation of His people.

Your devoted and loving

ADINA.

LETTER XI.

MY DEAR FATHER,

IN my last letter to you I spoke of our return from Jordan to Gilgal, to the lodge in the wheat-fields of Peniel, where Rabbi Amos sojourns during the two weeks of harvest. At the house were assembled, not only John, the cousin of Mary, and the noble Lazarus, but likewise Gamaliel, and Saul, his disciple, of whom I have before spoken. All of these were

invited to sojourn with my uncle for the night ; moreover, the court of the dwelling was thronged with strangers and with the common people, who, being far from their homes and without provisions, had been freely supplied with shelter and food by the hospitable priest.

As we sat up late, conversing with deep interest upon the remarkable events of the day, an observation made by John, who said of the change in the face of Jesus, that "His visage was marred more than the sons of men," led the venerable Gamaliel to say to us,

"Those are the words of the prophet Esaias, and are truly spoken by him of the Messias who shall come."

"Let us search in Esaias, then, and see what further he hath said," cried Rabbi Amos. "Mary, bring hither the roll of the prophets."

My cousin Mary brought the book, and placed it on a small stand before him, for we were all seated in the porch, where the evening breeze was cool. A lamp was then brought, and I held it above the rolls of parchment, while my uncle found the portion of the prophet where the words were written.

"Read aloud, good Rabbi," said the philosopher Gamaliel. "We will all listen ; for though I do not believe this young man who was to-day baptised, to be Messias and the Christ who is to restore all things to us, yet I am prepared to reverence him as a great prophet."

"And," answered Rabbi Amos, "if we find the prophecies fulfilled in him which we look for to meet in Messias when He cometh, wilt thou believe, venerable father ?"

"I will believe and reverently adore," answered the sage, and he bowed his head till his flowing white beard almost touched his knees.

"Read, Adina, for thine eyes are young," said my uncle ; and obedient, though embarrassed before such an assembly, I read these words :

"Behold, my servant shall deal prudently ; He shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. As many were astonished at thee ; His visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men."

"How completely," said John, "these words describe His appearance as He stood on the verge of the desert ! and yet I used them unconsciously."

"But," said Saul, Gamaliel's disciple, "if this is prophesied of the Christ, then we are to have a Christ of humility, and not one of glory and power. Read one part which you have omitted, maiden, and we shall see that there are words that import a higher condition than that of this stranger, whom John the Baptist himself confessed he did not know, nor had ever beheld before."

Thereupon I read these words :

"Behold, my servant shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high. He shall sprinkle many nations ; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him. He shall lift up His hand to the Gentiles, and set up His standard to the people. Kings shall bow down to Him with their faces to the earth, and lick up the dust of His feet."

"Such is *our* Messiah !" exclaimed Saul.

"Yes, it is a Christ of power and dominion that shall redeem Israel," added Gamaliel ; "not an unknown man, scarcely thirty years of age, who came whence no one knoweth, and hath gone no man knoweth whither. As for **THE CHRIST**, we shall know **WHENCE** He cometh !"

When I heard this great and good man thus discourse, dear father, my heart sank within me : for I could not but confess that these prophecies of honour and power could not apply to the humble man John had baptised ; for Lazarus had already told us that his friend Jesus was of lowly birth,—a carpenter's son, and his mother a widow ; that he had known Him from boyhood, and known Him only to love Him. I now looked towards Lazarus, and took courage when I saw that the

words of Gamaliel did not dim the light of his faith and confidence, which brightly sparkled in his eyes, that his friend Jesus was truly the Messiah of God. But my eye fell on the words that followed next, and as I read them I gained more confidence.

"He hath no form nor comeliness ; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him."

"If the first part of this prophecy," said Lazarus, his fine eyes lighting up as he looked at Saul, "be concerning the Christ, as you have just now confessed, then is this last concerning Him likewise ; and the fact that you reject Him is but the fulfilment of this part of the prophecy."

Hereupon arose a very warm discussion between Gamaliel and Saul on one side, and Rabbi Amos, John, and Lazarus on the other, the former party contending that the prophecies referred to two distinct Christs, one of whom was to be lowly and a sufferer, and the other honourable and a conqueror, while the latter maintained that the seemingly opposite predictions referred to but one Christ in two different periods of His life.

"But let this be as it may," said John, after the arguments on both sides had been well-nigh exhausted, "what think you, O Gamaliel, and you, Saul, of the wondrous voice and the fiery brightness which followed the baptism ?"

"That must have been a phenomenon of nature, or done by the art of the famed Babylonish sorcerer, whom I saw standing in the multitude," answered the philosopher.

"Did you not hear the words ?" asked Rabbi Amos.

"Yes, Rabbi ; nevertheless, they may have been thrown into the air by this sorcerer ; for they are able to do marvellous things."

"Thinkest thou that a sorcerer would take upon him to apply the sacred words of the Lord ?" asked John, earnestly.

"By no means," he answered, reverently.

"If Rabbi Amos will allow me, I will show you the very words in King David's prophecies of Messiah."

All looked with interest on John, as he took from his mantle a roll of the Psalms. He opened it, and read thus, looking at Gamaliel :

"Why do the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed? I will declare the decree. The Lord hath said unto me, 'Thou art my Son.'"

Upon hearing this, Gamaliel became thoughtful. Rabbi Amos said,

"Of a truth we Jews believe these words were to be spoken to our Christ by the Lord Jehovah. Have we not heard this prophecy fulfilled this very day in our ears?"

"It is marvellous," answered Gamaliel. "I will search the Scriptures when I reach Jerusalem, to see if these things are so."

"And the light in the form of a dove ! Dost thou find an explanation for that?" asked Rabbi Amos.

"No," answered he ; "and I will withhold all further opinion for the present."

"It becomes thee, O Gamaliel," said Rabbi Amos, "who art a father and teacher in Israel, to know whether these things be so, that thou mayest teach thy disciples."

"But," said Saul, with some vehemence, "listen while I also read some prophecies." And he unrolled the book of the prophets and read these words :

"'Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been ever of old, from everlasting.' Now, you will confess, Rabbi Amos," he added, with a look of triumph, "that this word refers to our expected Messiah."

"Without doubt," answered my uncle ; "but——"

"Wait, I beseech you, learned Rabbi," said Saul, "until I read you another prophecy." And he read :

"'I have made a covenant with David, Thy seed will I establish for ever, and build up thy thrones to all generations.

His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous BRANCH.' Now, you will all admit, brethren, that these prophecies refer to Messias. He is therefore to come of the lineage of David, and He is to be born in Bethlehem. Show me that this Jesus, the Nazarene, fulfils both conditions in his own person, and I will verily believe in him."

This was said haughtily, and with the air of one who cannot be answered.

But immediately Lazarus rose to his feet, and said,

"Although I remembered not this prophecy, that Christ should be born in Bethlehem, yet I am overjoyed to find the fact respecting Jesus fulfils it. He *was* born in Bethlehem of Judah. This I have known some years ; and——"

Here, while my heart was bounding with joy, Gamaliel said sternly,

"I thought this man was born in Nazareth?"

"He has lived," answered Lazarus, "in Nazareth from childhood only. During the days when Cæsar Augustus issued a decree that all the world should be taxed, His mother, and Joseph her husband, went up to be taxed to the city of David, which is Bethlehem, and there Jesus was born, as I have often heard from her lips. But this is recorded in the office of the Temple, and can be referred to there."

"Admitting, then, that he was born in Bethelam," said Saul, who, from his training in the schools, appeared to be much given to disputation, "you have to prove his descent from David's line."

"Wherefore did His parents go to Bethlehem, David's city, unless they were of his royal line?" asked Rabbi Amos ; "for none went to be taxed to any other city than that of their own family. The fact that they went there goeth far to show that they were of David's house."

"Every one born in the city of David," remarked Gamaliel,

"is not of necessity of David's house ; but it is marvellous if this Jesus really was born in Bethlehem."

"But may not His lineage be learned beyond a doubt from the records of the tribes, and of their families, kept by command of the law of the Temple?" I asked of my uncle.

"Without question. These books of the generations of our people are to be relied on," he answered.

"In truth," said Gamaliel, "they are kept with the greatest accuracy ; and it is so ordained by God, for the very reason that when Messias cometh, we may know whether he who claims to be Messias is of the house of David or no. I will examine the Book of the Generations, and see if his mother and father come of the stock and seed of David."

"And if you find that they do," asked John, with emotion, "can you doubt any longer that Jesus is the Christ? Will not the sign of His being born in Bethlehem, and of the lineage of David, not to speak of the witness of God's own audible voice, heard by our ears this day—will not these signs lead you to believe that He is the Christ?"

"They will prevent me from actually rejecting him," answered the cold philosopher. "But every child born in Bethlehem, and of the house of David—and there are many of them in Judah—fulfils, so far, the conditions of these two prophecies ; but this doth not make them Messiahs."

"What more can you require?" asked Mary, with feeling ; for she believed as strongly as I did that Jesus was the Christ, and was deeply pained by so many doubts and such subtlety of objection from those who were so learned in the prophets. But men reason and reason, while women simply believe.

"Miracles," answered the disciple of Gamaliel, glancing at the face of his master inquiringly.

"Yes, miracles," also answered the sage. "The Messias is to heal the sick by a word, to restore sight to the blind, to cast out devils, and raise even the dead." And here he desired

Saul to read the particular prophecy which ascribes the power of miracles to the Christ.

"If he restore the blind and raise the dead, I will doubt no longer," answered Saul.

There was at this moment an interruption, caused by noisy debates in the court among some of John the Baptist's disciples, certain of whom were disposed to acknowledge fully the superiority of Jesus ; while others, still possessed by the full fervour of their first conversion, stoutly contended for the transcendent greatness of him whom they regarded as their own prophet. Rabbi Amos, as master of the house, went out to put an end to these disputings, and Gamaliel retired to his chamber ; and the conversation was not renewed.

Thus, you see, my dear father, that even on the very day of these marvellous events, there is much difference of opinion among eye-witnesses themselves concerning Jesus ; and therefore I do not expect that you, who are so remote from the scene, and who know these things only by report, should believe all at once, as I myself do. Will you write to me and tell me what you think touching this matter, and what can be brought from the Scriptures to prove that in this Jesus Messiah has not come ?

The next morning early the people departed from the court where they had lodged ; and when the sun was about an hour high we also set forth and rode to Jericho, where we passed the day with Miriam, the daughter of Joel, who was cousin to my mother.

Lazarus has returned to Bethany, whither his occupation calleth him ; but John, the son of Eliasaph, remains with us, having agreed with Lazarus that he would go forth alone into the desert, and not give up his search for the divine Prophet Jesus until he had found Him ; for both these young men feel as sad as if they had lost a beloved and honoured brother.

Your daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XII.

MY DEAR FATHER,

How shall I thank you for your long-suffering with me, and for your kind answers to all my letters, filled as those letters are with so many questions and opinions which must surprise and perhaps displease you? You say that you have read with impartiality all that I have written, and that you do not marvel that one whom you are pleased to call so imaginative and full of sensibility as myself should be affected by what has passed in my sight in Judea. You nevertheless refuse, on your part, my dear father, to listen, as one who would fain believe, to the wondrous things I have told. You are pleased to question the reality of the voice at Jordan and the presence of the dove of fire, and to refer this, as many others try to do who actually witnessed it, to an illusion of the senses. You are willing to admit that Jesus may have been born at Bethlehem, for many whom you know "who are not prophets, neither sons of prophets, were born there." You are willing to admit that He may be of the lineage of David, for, you say, David's descendants are as numerous as they are poor and obscure, yet they are not Messiahs, nor do they pretend to be Christs. You are content to doubt the accuracy of the memory of the mother of Lazarus, as to the scene in the Temple, about thirty years ago, described to you by my cousin Mary in her letter, though you acknowledge you have often seen both Simeon and Anna in the Temple about the time stated by her. But your main objection to receiving John's evidence that this is the Christ is, "that he is poor, of humble station, without power, and hath received baptism at the hands of a man, whereas the Messiah was to be the anointed of God." Who, you ask, of the wise, the

prudent, the learned, and the aged, that have years and experience ; who of the doctors, lawyers, and priests ; who of the scribes, and who of the Pharisees, and of the great men of Israel, will agree in acknowledging this Jesus as Him of whom Moses and the prophets wrote ; as the central Sun on which attend all the dazzling prophecies of Esaias ; as the end and fulfilling of the law ; as the Lion of the tribe of Judah ; as the Shiloh of the nations ; as the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace ; as the Glory of Israel, and the Joy of the whole earth ?—who will see all this in an obscure young man of thirty, unlearned in letters, the son of a carpenter, a citizen of Nazareth (a city proverbially mean), a man without name, character, power, rank, or wealth, and the last that was heard of whom was that he had fled into the desert ? You add, dear father, that the mere comparison of what the true Christ ought to be with the enumeration of what is wanting in this man should be sufficient to convince me that I have given my belief and faith to one who has no claim to them. You say further, that you do not call my Messiah an impostor, because, so far as you can learn, he has professed nothing, proclaimed nothing, declared nothing respecting himself : in silence he appeared, and in silence disappeared, none knowing whence he came or whither he went ; and you close your review of my history by saying that you shall wait for further report before you can give the subject your serious consideration.

In your next letter, where you again allude to the theme, you say that if this prophet reappears, and with his own lips declares himself sent from God, and by an appeal to undisputed miracles gives proofs of his divine mission, declaring himself thereby to be the Christ, you will then believe in him, provided the whole of the prophecies can be shown to be fulfilled in his person.

I am willing that it should be thus, dearest father ; and you add, with your usual candour, that you will not hesitate

to acknowledge as the Christ a man who fulfils all prophecy in his own person, though come in a state and condition contrary to your expectations of the character of the Messias ; for that it would be safer for you to question the truth of your own interpretation of the Messianic prophecies hitherto, than the mission of one in whom, without question, do meet all the golden threads of the predictions relating to the Christ. Here I am content, my dear father, to let the question remain, being, however, fully persuaded in my own mind that though this humble young man Jesus hath come poor and obscure into the world, yet He will prove that He is the true Messias, the Christ of God.

Now, my dear father, let me resume the matter of which my letters have been so full ; moreover, as you have desired me still to keep you informed of all that is done touching Jesus of Nazareth, and as no theme upon which I can write is so pleasing to me, I will here narrate all that I have heard since I last wrote to you.

It is now eight weeks since we returned from Gilgal. For five weeks after we reached Jerusalem, we heard nothing of Jesus, until John, son of Eliasaph, reappeared. He and Lazarus entered the city together, and came to the house of Rabbi Amos. Our first question was—

“Have you seen Him ? Have you any tidings of Him ?”

“John has seen Him,” answered Lazarus, seriously ; “ask him, and he will tell you all.”

We looked at John, who sat sad and pensive, as if he were revolving in his mind some painful yet tender sorrow. The eyes of my cousin Mary, which always caught their lustre from his, were shaded with an anxious look of sympathy and solicitude.

“You are not well,” she said, placing her fair hand upon his white brow, and putting back the hair from his temples. “You have been long away, and are weary and weak.”

“Weary, Mary ? I shall never complain of weariness again after what I have beheld.”

"What have you seen?" I asked.

"Jesus in the desert; and when I remember Him there, I shall forget to smile."

"You found Him, then?" I eagerly asked.

"Yes; after days of painful search, I found Him in the very centre of the Desert of Ashes, where foot of man had never trodden before. I saw Him upon His knees, and heard His voice in prayer. I laid down the sack of bread and fishes and the skin of water I had brought with me to succour Him, and with awe I drew near where He stood."

"How did you find Him there, I asked?" for I was eager to hear all.

"By His footsteps in the sand and ashes. I saw where He had been kneeling, and where two nights He had reposed upon the ground. I expected to find Him dead, but each day I discovered His progressing footsteps, and followed them. As I drew near Him, I heard Him groan in spirit, and He seemed to be borne down to the earth by some mortal agony. He appeared to be talking with some invisible beings who assailed Him."

"'Rabbi, good Master,' I said, 'I have brought Thee food and water. Pardon me if I have broken in upon Thine awful loneliness, which is sacred to some deep grief; but I weep with Thee for Thy woes, and in all Thy afflictions I am afflicted. Eat, that Thou mayest have strength to endure Thy mysterious sufferings.'

"He turned His pale countenance full upon me, and extended towards me His emaciated hands, while He smiled faintly, and blessed me, and said—

"'Son, thou art very dear to me. Thou shalt one day be afflicted for me, but not now, and then shalt thou understand wherefore I am now a sufferer in the desert.'

"'Let me remain with Thee, divine Messiah,' I said.

"'Thou believest, then, that I am He?' He answered, looking on me with eyes of love.

"I replied by casting myself at His toil-worn feet, and bathing them with my tears. He raised me up, and said—

"Go thy way now. When the time of my fasting and temptation is past, I will talk with thee again."

"Nay, I will not leave Thee," I declared.

"If thou lovest me, beloved, thou wilt obey me," He answered in a tone of gentle reproof.

"But Thou wilt first eat of the bread I have brought and drink of the water?" I entreated.

"Thou knowest not what thou art offering to me," He replied, sadly. "Thou hast not enough for thine own needs. Go, and leave me to gain the victory over Satan, the prince of this world, to be tempted of whom I was led by the Spirit hither."

"I once more cast myself at His feet, and He lifted me up, kissed me, and sent me away. Oh, you would not have known Him! Worn and emaciated by long abstinence, weak through suffering, He looked but the shadow of Himself. He could not have lived thus if there had not been a divine power within to sustain Him! His existence so long, for He had been in the desert five weeks without food when I found Him, was a miracle in itself, proving the power of God to be in Him."

"For what mighty work among men is God preparing Him?" said Rabbi Amos, solemnly. "Surely He is a prophet come from God."

"Think you He still lives?" I asked, with anxious fear, scarce trusting my voice above a whisper.

"Yes," answered John; "I am come to tell you he was divinely sustained through all; and after forty days, He came forth from the wilderness, and suddenly presented Himself on the banks of the Jordan, among John's disciples. I was standing near the Baptist, discoursing concerning the Christ, and marvelling when His exile to the desert would terminate, when the prophet, lifting up his eyes, cried with a loud voice full of joy—

"Behold again the Lamb of God, upon whom the Spirit of God descended ! He hath come from the furnace like gold seven times tried in the fire ! He it is who alone taketh away the sins of the world."

"I turned, and beheld Jesus advancing. He was pale, and wore on His benign countenance an expression of gentle, uncomplaining suffering. His calm, dignified aspect, the serenity and peace of His looks, awed me while they caused me to love Him. I hastened to meet Him, and was kneeling in joy at His feet, when He embraced me as a brother, and said—

"Faithful and full of love, wilt thou follow me ?"

"I will never leave Thee," I answered.

"Where dwellest Thou, divine Master ?" then asked one of John's disciples, Andrew by name, who was with me.

"Come, my friends, and see," He answered ; and we went after Him with joy unutterable.

"What passed between Him and the Baptist," asked Rabbi Amos, "at this meeting on the river-side ?"

"Not a word : they met and parted like strangers, John going away across Jordan into the wilderness, as Jesus entered the village of Bethabara ; and approaching the house of a widow, where He dwelt, He went in, and we followed Him, and by His request took up our abode with Him. Oh, how shall I be able to make known by words," added John, "the sweetness of His discourse ? In one day, in His presence, I grew wise ; His words filled my soul like new wine, and made my heart glad. The next day He wished to depart into Galilee, and so on to Nazareth, where His mother dwelleth ; and, as I am resolved to follow Him as His disciple henceforth, I am only come hither to make known my purpose to Mary, and to set my house in order in the city. To-morrow I go forth again to join my dear Lord at Cana of Galilee."

"Oh, happy and enviable friend and brother !" said Lazarus. "How gladly would I go also, and become one of His disciples ! But the care of my mother and sisters cometh upon

me, and I must deny myself the happiness of being for ever near this Divine Man, and listening to the heavenly wisdom that flows from His lips. How blind have I been, that I discovered not the Messiah under His gentle and loving character and unobtrusive wisdom! Truly He was among us and we knew Him not."

"Canst thou at all divine His purpose?" asked Rabbi Amos of John, "whether He intends to found a school of wisdom, to preach as the prophets preached, to reign like David, or to conquer like Joshua, the warrior of old?"

"I know not, save that He said He came to redeem that which was lost, and to establish a kingdom that shall have no end!"

When we heard this all our hearts bounded with hope and confidence in Him, and we all with one accord burst forth into a voice of joy and thanksgiving, and sang this hymn of praise:—

"O sing unto the Lord a new song: for He hath done marvellous things; His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten the victory.

"The Lord hath made known His salvation; His righteousness hath He openly showed in the sight of the heathen.

"He hath remembered His mercy and His truth towards the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

"Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing His praise.

"Sing unto the Lord with the harp: with the harp, and the voice of a psalm.

"With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the Lord the King.

"Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

"Let the floods clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the Lord.

"For He cometh to judge the earth; with righteousness shall He judge the world, and the people with equity."

There was this morning, dear father, no small stir among the chief priests, caused by a formal question sent by Pilate to Caiaphas the High Priest, asking whether this new

prophet was to be acknowledged by them as their Messiah ; "for if he is to be, it will behove me," said the Governor, "to place him under ward, inasmuch as we understand the Jewish Messias intendeth to declare Himself king !" Upon this, there was a tumultuous assembling together of the priests in the porch of the Temple, and with many oaths they agreed to send answer to Pilate that they did not acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth to be the Christ. They were led the more urgently to this, inasmuch as they feared the taking of Jesus would give the Romans occasion for imprisoning other Jews, and so bring on the nation great troubles ; just as, a few years ago, when a certain impostor rose up and called himself the Christ, the Romans were not satisfied with taking and slaying him, but they punished with fines every city in Judah. Therefore the priests denied to the Procurator all knowledge of Jesus, and entreated him to give no heed to him, till, indeed, he should find that he openly became a leader of armed men. What Pilate will resolve to do I know not. Rabbi Amos informed us that the Procurator had heard by a messenger that morning, that Jesus, on His way to Cana, had been followed by full a thousand people, who, having recognised Him as the baptised of John in Jordan, hailed Him as the Christ.

Thus, you see, my dear father, that this Divine Leader is already taking hold on the hearts of the people, and arousing the jealousy of our enemies. Be assured that the day will come when He shall lift up His standard before the Gentiles, and draw all men unto Him. The signs of His power are increasing daily ; and although He has yet performed no such miracle as would be deemed by you a test of His divine mission, yet I doubt not that in due time He will give this proof, and all other needful manifestations, that He is the Christ of God.

Your loving

ADINA.

LETTER XIII.

MY DEAR FATHER,

Your last letter by the Cairo merchant, Heber, the son of Malchial, hath been delivered to me. I have read it to Rabbi Amos, and he says, after careful reflection thereupon, that he cannot agree with you in your opinion touching the undimmed glory of Messiah, "that He is to come as a King, and as a mighty Leader of Hosts, and reign and prosper, and rule the earth, King of the kings of the earth." He desires me to ask you what is meant by the prophecy describing Messias as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and how you interpret, dear father, other than as referring to a violent end, the words of the wise Daniel, "And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself." My uncle also desires me to ask you to examine into the time named by Daniel, when Messiah the Prince is to come, and to take note that we live in the day of the close of the threescore and two weeks, whereof the prophet writeth and saith, "Know, therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks and threescore and two weeks." Rabbi Amos says that the time for the appearing of Christ is verily come, as all must confess who read the prophets; and the only reason that Jesus is not believed to be the Messiah is that He comes in poverty and humility, fasting and suffering. But, my dear father, may it not be ordained that the Christ shall begin in lowliness and end in power? Oh, that you, dearest and most honoured father, could have the faith that I have in Jesus of Nazareth, that He is Messias! Since I last wrote to you my faith has been confirmed by the

testimony which in one of your letters you demanded. You said, "Let me hear that he has wrought an acknowledged miracle in attestation of the divinity of his mission—a miracle such as it was prophesied Messias shall do—healing the sick by a word, restoring the blind to sight, and raising the dead—and I will prepare to believe in him."

A miracle He hath performed, dear father, and one whereof the truth is not disputed by any one. I can tell the tale best by extracting from a letter written by John to Mary, a few days after his departure to join Jesus at Nazareth; for John has joined himself to Him, and is become His disciple.

"When I reached Nazareth," saith the letter, "I was guided to the humble dwelling occupied by the mother of Jesus, by seeing a large concourse of people gathered about it; of whom inquiring, I learned that they had thus assembled to see the new prophet.

"'What new prophet?' I asked, for I was willing to know what the multitude thought concerning Jesus.

"'He whom John of the Wilderness foretold,' answered one.

"'They say he is Messias,' said another.

"'He is the Christ,' boldly asserted a third.

"Hereupon, a Levite, standing by, said scornfully—

"'Shall Christ come out of the country of Galilee? To what purpose read ye the prophets, if ye see in them any prophecy of a Christ to come out of Nazareth of Galilee?'

"Hereupon, seeing that the faith of many was shaken, I said—

"Brethren, Christ is truly to be of Bethlehem, and verily Jesus, though now He dwelleth in this place, was born in Bethlehem."

"'Thou canst not prove it,' said the Levite, angrily.

"'The stranger speaketh truth,' said an old man and a grey-haired woman in the crowd; 'we know that He was not born here, and that when His parents came hither, when

He was a babe, they said He was born in Bethlehem. We all remember this well.'

"Hereupon the Levite, seeing that the people were not with him, passed on his way, while I went to the door of the house where Jesus dwelt with His mother. There were two doors, one of which led into a workshop, where I beheld the bench and tools belonging to the trade at which He had toiled to support Himself and His mother. The sight made me half question whether He, who was a humble carpenter, whose working tools and shop I saw before me, could in truth be the Christ of God, the Prince Messias whom all the patriarchs and prophets looked for with the eye of faith, desiring to see His day; and it needed the recollection of the wonderful scenes of His baptism, the holy dove and voice of God, and His miraculous preservation in the wilderness, to revive my confidence; but when I entered the dwelling, and saw Him standing, teaching those who hung on His lips, and listened to His calm voice, and heard the sublime wisdom of His instructions, beheld the dignity of His aspect, and felt the heavenly benignity of His manner, I forgot the carpenter, I forgot the man, and beheld in Him only Messiah the Prince, the Son of God.

"When He beheld me, He extended His hand, and received me graciously, and said, pointing to five men who stood near Him, gazing on Him with mingled love and reverence—

"‘These are thy brethren, who have also given up the world to follow me.’

"Of these, one was Andrew, who had been, like myself, a disciple of John, to whom we were both talking when Jesus came forth out of the wilderness. Another was Andrew's brother Simon, who, hearing his brother speak of Jesus as the Christ, had gone forth with Andrew to see Him; but he had no sooner beheld the divine Teacher than he joined himself to Him; and Jesus, seeing the firmness and immovable zeal of the new disciple's character, called him also Peter, or

the Stone. The fourth disciple was a man of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. His name was Philip, and he followed Jesus from having been prepared by John the Baptist to receive Him. Moreover, he rejoiced so greatly at finding the Christ, that he ran to the house of his kinsman Nathaniel, and finding him in his garden, beneath a fig tree, at prayer, exclaimed—

“We have found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, the Messiah of God !”

“Where is He, that I may behold Him ?” asked Nathaniel.

“It is Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph,” Philip answered.

“Upon hearing this answer, the countenance of Nathaniel fell, and he replied—

“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth ?”

“Come and see for thyself,” answered Philip.

“Nathaniel then went with him where Jesus was. When Jesus saw him approaching, He said to those about Him—

“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile !”

“How comes it that thou knowest me ?” asked Nathaniel, wondering, for he had heard the words which were spoken.

“Jesus answered and said—

“Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.”

“Upon hearing this, Nathaniel, who knew that he was alone and unseen in his garden at prayer when his brother came, steadfastly regarded the serene face of Jesus, and then, as if he beheld therein the witness of omnipresence, he cried before all the people—

“Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God ! Thou art the King of Israel !”

“Jesus looked upon him as one well pleased at his confession, and said—

“Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou ? Thou shalt see greater things than these.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'

"These four, Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathaniel, were then present in the house with Him; and with wonder and joy I beheld standing with them my own brother James, whom Jesus had seen on the lake in his boat, and had called; when James also left all and followed Him. Thus we were six disciples in all, bound to Him in the bond of faith and love. The mother of Jesus, a noble and matronly woman, still beautiful, and with a face of the holiest serenity, was present, and gazed with pride and tenderness upon her Son, listening to His words, as if she would also learn of Him that wisdom which hath descended upon Him from above. The next day I went with James to the Sea of Tiberias, but two hours distant, to see our father Zebedee, and give up to him all we had or expected to receive; and during the afternoon Jesus passed near the shore on His way to Cana. He called us, and we for ever left our ships and our father, and joined Him. His mother and many of her kinsfolk were of the company. They were all going to the marriage of a cousin of the family. When we arrived at Cana, we were brought into the guest-chamber, and Jesus especially was received with marked respect by the Hebrew master of the house, an officer in the service of the Romans. We here met Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, a relative of Mary the mother of Jesus. The meeting between these two blessed women was very touching.

"'How blessed art thou, O Mary!' said the mother of John the prophet, as she looked upon Jesus, who was talking with the governor of the feast, 'how blessed art thou, that hast thy Son ever with thee; while I am a mother, and yet no mother. The son whom God gave me He hath taken from me to be His prophet, and he is to me as one that is dead. Since his twelfth year he has been a dweller in the wilderness,

consorting with no man, until six months ago he came forth to proclaim, according to the word of the Lord, the advent of thy holy Son.'

"The marriage feast at length began. The wine which should have come from Damascus had not arrived, for the caravan had been delayed by the rising near Cæsarea. The guests had, therefore, but little wine, and the chief ruler of the town—the master of the feast—seeing that there was no wine, bade the servants place more upon the board. The mother of Jesus, who knew that there was no more to bring, turning to Him, said, 'They have no wine;' for it seems that she knew of the mighty power that was within Him, though He had not yet manifested it openly. I sat next to Him, and heard the words she whispered to Jesus. The holy Prophet of God looked grave, and said, with a slight tone of respectful reproof, applying to her that title which we in Judæa hold more honourable than all others,

"'Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour for manifesting my glory to the world is not yet come; nevertheless, I will do what I perceive thou desirest me to do.'

"She then thanked Him with deep and grateful emotion, and turning to the servants, beckoned to them, while her cheek borrowed a rich colour from her hidden joy, and her eyes kindled with the feelings of a mother about to see her son display powers such as only come by the peculiar gift of God—powers which were to seal Him as a mighty Prophet before the eyes of Jew and Gentile. For myself, not anticipating or suspecting what was to take place, I regarded the emotion of the joyful mother with marvel. When two or three of the servants had approached, she said to them,

"'Whatsoever He saith to you, do it.'

"They then stood and looked upon the Prophet, awaiting His commands, as little suspecting what these would be as I myself. The face of Jesus, ever calm and dignified, now seemed to assume a look of majesty inexpressible, and His

eyes to express a certain inward consciousness of power that awed me. Casting His glance upon several stone vases, which stood by the door empty, He said to the servants,

“Fill the water-pots with water.”

“In the court, in full sight from the table, was a well, to which the servants forthwith went with jars. I saw them fill these jars with water; then bearing it in upon their heads, they poured it out into the water-pots, until they had filled them all, six in number, to the brim. While this was going on, the governor of the feast was relating to the guests, who listened attentively to him, how that Herod and Pontius Pilate had recently become enemies, because Pilate on his way from Caesarea Philippi to Jerusalem, to be present with his forces during the time of the Passover, having come at night to a caravanserai which was occupied by Herod and his body-guard, drove all the latter forth to make room for his own retinue, saying that a Roman Procurator was more honourable than a Jewish Tetrarch of Galilee. ‘It will be long,’ added the governor, as the last water-pot was filled, ‘before this quarrel will be made up between them. But we talk, my friends, and forget our wine.’

“‘Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast,’ said Jesus to the servants.

“They obeyed: rich blood-red wine flowed from the jars which I and others had seen filled up with simple water from the well, and the amazed servants bore it to the chief of the feast. He had no sooner filled his goblet and tasted its contents than he called to the bridegroom, who sat at the table, and said,

“‘Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine, and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse; but thou hast kept the good wine until now.’

“‘Who hath brought this wine?’ asked the bridegroom, drinking of the water that was made wine. ‘Whence it came, sir, I know not.’

"Then the servants and others told that they had filled the six water-pots with water to the brim, at the command of Jesus the Prophet, and that when they drew out, behold, wine flowed forth instead of water! Upon this there was a general exclamation of surprise; the governor of the feast cried out, 'A great prophet indeed hath been among us, and we knew it not!' and he rose to approach and do honour to Jesus; but Jesus had already conveyed Himself away, rising at once and passing out through the door, and seeking the solitude of the gardens. Thither I followed Him, and, worshipping Him, sat at His feet and listened while He unfolded to me wonderful things concerning Himself, showing that He is truly the Son of God and the very Christ. But of these things I cannot speak to thee now, for I do not clearly understand all that He is to be, save that I know He is destined to suffer and to be exalted. Doubt not," concludes the letter to Mary, "doubt not that Jesus is the Christ. His miracle at Cana, the turning of water into wine, is a public display of His divine power. All men at the feast have believed on Him, and His fame is noised abroad throughout Galilee and Samaria. He has told me privately that He must soon visit Jerusalem, and He will there openly proclaim His mission as the Christ of God."

In this manner, my dearest father, writes the betrothed husband of my cousin Mary; and I have given you the above extract from his letter, that you may see that Jesus is already attracting great attention, that He has disciples, and that He is by no means poor who has the power to convert wells of water into wine! From this letter you must perceive that Jesus is at least a prophet equal to Elijah, who kept full the cruse of the widow of Zarephath. If, therefore, you acknowledge thus much, you must confess that He is a good man. Now, a good man will not deceive. Yet Jesus hath plainly told John that He Himself is the Christ! How, then, my dear father, can any one deny, who believes Him

to be a prophet, that He is even more than a prophet, even Messias? Pardon your daughter for thus presuming to reason with you; but I am so earnest that you should believe, that I sometimes forget the duty of a daughter in zeal as a disciple of Jesus. As for my uncle, the good and learned Rabbi Amos, he is more than half the disciple of this great Prophet; and I have no doubt that when Jesus shall present Himself in Jerusalem, and Rabbi Amos can see Him and hear His divine teachings, he will cast off all doubt, and become His open follower.

The rumour of the miracle at Cana has reached Jerusalem since I began this letter, and I hear that it has produced no little stir in the market-places and courts of the Temple. Rabbi Amos, on his return from sacrifice a few minutes ago, said that he saw, in the court of the Temple, more than thirty priests with rolls of the prophets in their hands, engaged in searching for the prophecies of the Christ. So, my dear father, you see that the young man "who came," as you remarked, "no one knew whence, and went no one knew whither," is already taking hold on the attention of Israel, and stirring up the minds of all men to investigate His claims to the title of the Christ.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XIV.

MY DEAR FATHER,

You will not require the testimony of my letters to carry to you the fame of Jesus, the wonderful Prophet of Nazareth, who is daily proving Himself a prophet indeed, and mighty before God, showing all the people that God is with Him. Not a stranger cometh into Jerusalem but he brings the

report of some new miracle that He hath done, some wonderful manifestation of His power. He still delays visiting Jerusalem, but is engaged in preaching the coming of the kingdom of David and of God on earth, teaching in the synagogues, and showing from the prophets that He Himself is truly the Messiah. His fame for wisdom, for knowledge of the Scriptures, for power to teach, and for miracles, has gone abroad through all Syria, so that they bring to Him sick persons, both rich and poor, even from Damascus, to be healed of Him ; and He heals all who are brought unto Him, whether they are possessed of devils, are lunatic, or are sick of the palsy. His footsteps are attended by thousands where-soever He goes, and even the Governor of Philippi, descending by the wayside from his chariot, hath mingled in the throng, and kneeling at His feet, asked Him to heal his son, who was palsied ; and his son was healed by Him by a word, though lying sick many leagues away. While I now write a company is passing the window, bearing upon beds two wealthy men of Jerusalem, whom no physicians can heal, and who are going to Him to be cured ; for all Jerusalem talks of nothing else than of the wonderful miracles of Jesus. There is a man, a weaver of baskets, who has occupied a stall opposite our house for many years. He had been a cripple for twelve years, and his friends carried him to and fro. Hearing of the fame of Jesus, he was seized with a strong conviction that he might be miraculously cured. Therefore he begged money from the priests as they went by to the Temple ; but though some gave, all laughed, saying that he could not be cured, inasmuch as one of his limbs was withered. But the man had faith, and, having begged from the benevolent silver enough for his journey, hired two men to convey him five days' journey into Galilee. Lo ! at the end of three weeks he returned, walking upright and whole in body and limbs. All the city flocked to behold him ; and he related how that when he reached Capernaum.

where Jesus was, the crowd was so great that his bearers could not for some time get near Him. At length Jesus moved on, healing the sick with a word as He passed through them.

"Seeing me," continued the man, "He fixed his eyes upon me, and said, calling me by name—

"Great is thy faith. As thou hast believed, be it done unto thee."

"Immediately my legs and ankle-bones received strength; I leaped from the litter to the ground, and found that I was wholly free from pain and disease, and that my shrunken limb was restored sound as the other. I would have fallen at His feet in the fulness of my joy, but the crowds which pressed around Him separated Him from my sight. But I filled the air with shouts of rejoicing and hallelujahs to the Son of David!"

This man, my dear father, I now see daily moving about, sound in limb and health; and this instance is but one of a thousand. John, who follows Jesus whithersoever He goes, and is a witness of all that He does and teaches, writes to Mary that "the sick and afflicted from all parts of the land of Galilee, from Decapolis, from Jerusalem, from beyond Jordan, even from Lesser Asia, come to Him. When my beloved Master," he writes, "hath come forth from a synagogue where He has been reading the prophets to the people, who hear Him gladly, I have beheld two hundred people, the lame, the palsied, the withered, the blind, the possessed of devils, and men afflicted with all manner of diseases, laid in rows before the gate of the synagogue, awaiting His coming forth. Those who bore or held them were standing near them in eager expectant groups. It was a painful, yet a wondrous sight, to behold the hollow eyes of those wretched sufferers turned towards the door as the people came running forth, shouting, "He comes! He comes!" The writhing torments of the possessed with devils ceased in a moment,

and groans gave way to expectant silence. Jesus at length appeared, and upon seeing His face, that ever expresses holy benignity and power, all set up touching cries of the most thrilling appeal for His aid, "and such appeals are never uttered in vain. Going through the rows of beds and litters. He laid His hand upon some, spoke a word to others, touched the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, placed His hand gently on the head of the lunatic, commanded the devils in tones of authority to leave the bodies of the possessed. And it is a marvellous thing," continues John, "that the devils always rage with more terrific violence as He draws near; and while with curses they leave the possessed, they confess loudly that Jesus is 'the Son of David—the Son of God!' and implore Him in the most abject manner not utterly to destroy them! So great is the multitude which everywhere follows Him, that He is often compelled to withdraw from them secretly, to take refuge in some shelter where He can refresh His wearied strength for a few days. At such times we who are His immediate followers have the benefit of His teaching and private instructions. But He cannot remain long away from the people. They soon break in upon His retirement, and He never can refuse their appeals to His miraculous powers to do them good. How wonderful is He who thus holds in His hands divine power! The authority of kings is as nothing before the might which He possesses in His voice; yet He is serene, humble—oh, how humble!—to our shame—and calm and gentle always. He spends much time in private prayer to God, whom He always addresses as His Father. Never was such a man on earth. We who know Him most intimately stand most in awe of Him; yet with our deep reverence for His holy character is combined the purest affection. At one and the same time I feel that I adore Him as my Lord and love Him even as my brother. Thus we all feel towards Him. His lovingkindness, His pity for our ignorance, His

forbearance with our grossness, His ready patience for us when we are in fault, all have bound us to Him with ties that can never be sundered. When I next write to you," continues John, "I will relate to you, so far as they are understood by me and my fellow-disciples, the things which He reveals respecting Himself, and the object of His mission on earth. Many of His sayings, however, are not understood by us, but He promises that we shall by-and-by know what now appears obscure to us."

Such, my dear father, are the letters which my cousin Mary receives from John, the disciple of Jesus. They are all filled with accounts of His miracles, of His teachings, and of His journeyings. When we see Jesus at Jerusalem I shall be able to write to you more particularly concerning His doctrines and miracles. That He is the Christ thousands now believe; for they ask, very naturally, how could He do these things unless God were with Him? And for another weighty matter, it has been proven from the examination made by some of the Scribes of the Temple, that He was truly born in Bethlehem, and that both His mother Mary and Joseph her husband are lineal descendants of the house of David. Moreover, Phineas, the venerable priest, whom you know, hath borne testimony to the fact that when Jesus was an infant, during the reign of the elder Herod, there came to Jerusalem three eminent princes, men of wisdom and learning. One of these came from Persia, one from the Grecian province of Media, and one from Arabia; and they brought with them gifts of gold and spices, and were attended by retinues. These three princes reached Jerusalem the same day by three different ways and entered by three different gates, neither knowing aught of the presence or object of the others till they met in the city before Herod's palace. One declared himself to be descended from Shem, the other from Japheth, and the third from Ham; and, it is said, they mysteriously typified all the races of the earth, who by them

recognised and adored the Saviour of men in the child Jesus. Herod, the king, hearing that these three strangers had arrived in Jerusalem, sent to inquire wherefore they had honoured his kingdom with a visit. "They answered," said Phineas, as he related the narrative in the presence of Caiaphas and many of the rulers and Pharisees, "that they came to do homage to the young Prince who was born King of the Jews. And when Herod asked what prince they spoke of, they answered, 'We have seen His star in the east, and are come to worship Him.'"

"How know you that the star you have seen indicates the birth of a prince of Judæa?" demanded King Herod, greatly troubled at what he heard.

"It moved towards this city," they answered; "and we have been led by a heavenly guidance to follow it, and, lo! it has led us to Jerusalem, over which, were it now night, you would see it suspended, burning with exceeding brightness; and it hath been revealed to us that it is the star of the birth of One who is to reign King of Judah. Tell us, therefore, O king, where this august Prince is now to be found, that we may worship Him."

"Hereupon," said Phineas, "the king issued an edict for all the chief priests and Scribes of the people to assemble in the council-chamber of his palace. He then spoke these words:

"Ye to whom is given the care of the books of the law and of the prophets, whose study they are, and in whom lieth the skill to interpret the prophecies, search ye therein, and tell me truly where the Christ is to be born. Behold here present these noble and wise men, who have come from afar to do Him honour—nay, more, as they aver, to worship Him as God. Let us, therefore, courteously give them the answer that they seek, and let us not be found more ignorant of these things than they who dwell in other lands."

"Several of the chief priests then rose, and said—

“It is known, O king, to all who are Jews, and who read the prophets, that *Messias* cometh of the house of David, of the town of Bethlehem ; for thus it is written by the prophet : And thou, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, art not least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.’

“This question being thus answered,” continued Phineas, “Herod dismissed the council, and, retiring to his own private room, secretly sent to the three princes of the East to inquire of them what time the star had appeared. And when they had named the very day and hour on which they had first seen it, he was thereby enabled to judge concerning the probable age of the infant. He then said to them—

“You have my permission, noble strangers, to go to Bethlehem and search for the young child ; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also ; for it is but meet that we should pay every possible honour to a prince of our realm whose birth is heralded in so marvellous a manner, and to worship whom even the East sends forth her wise men.’

“They then left the presence of Herod ; and it being dark when they left the palace, they were overjoyed to behold the star which they saw in the East going before them. They followed it, leaving Jerusalem by the Bethlehem Gate, and it led them on to the town of Bethlehem and stopped above a humble dwelling there. When they were come into the house, they saw the rays of the star resting upon the head of an infant in the arms of its mother Mary, the wife of Joseph. They at once acknowledged and hailed this child as Prince and King of Israel, and fell down and worshipped Him ; then opening their treasures, they presented unto Him gold, and frankincense, and myrrh—gifts that are offered on the altar to God alone.”

When Phineas was asked by Caiaphas how he knew this fact, he answered that he himself, urged by a desire to see

LETTER XV.

MY DEAR FATHER,

The question you ask in your last letter, "What hath become of the prophet of Jordan, since the fame of Jesus hath so far eclipsed his own?" I can answer but with sadness. Your inquiry seems to infer that that prophet would envy the power and the miracles that distinguish his successor. But John always plainly declared in his preaching that "he was not worthy to unloose the shoe-latchet of Him who was to come after him;" and he distinctly said many times to all, "He to whom I bear witness must increase, but I must decrease." The mission of John terminated when Jesus came. Soon afterwards, he left the wilderness and entered Jericho, where Herod chanced then to be sojourning. Here he preached in the public places, and in the market, and on the very steps of the Governor's palace, that God's judgments were coming upon the earth, and that men must, by repentance, appease His wrath, and that the Christ would be the Judge of men. Now, while he was thus speaking to the people, and to the officers and soldiers of the Tetrarch's guard, Herod himself came forth upon the balcony to listen, for he had heard in Galilee much concerning John, and had long desired to hear him. The prophet no sooner beheld him than he boldly addressed him, and sternly reprov'd Herod for the sin of having married the wife of his brother Philip, contrary to the law. Now Herod, it is said, did not show resentment at his plain dealing; but, inviting the prophet into his hall, talked much with him, and on dismissing him offered him gifts, which John refused to touch. The next day he sent for him again, to ask him some questions touching the Messiah of whom he preached. Now Herodias,

when it was reported to her, after the return of Herod from Jericho to his Tetrarchy, how that the prophet had publicly spoken against her marriage with Herod, became very angry ; and when she found that John was still favoured by her husband, she sent for Herod, and said, "that if he would please her, he must throw the prophet of Jordan into prison." Herod would have excused the prophet, asserting that he was a man of God ; but Herodias only the more vehemently insisted that he should be cast into prison. At length Herod yielded, against his own will, and gave orders for the arrest of the prophet, who the same night was brought a prisoner to the castle. When this intelligence reached the followers of John, they were much grieved ; and many went to see him and talk with him. But he told them they must think of *him* no longer : that his brief life was drawing to its close ; but he exhorted them to turn their eyes towards the Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, whose rising was unto an everlasting day. "Said I not unto you," he asked of them, "He must increase and I must decrease" ? For some weeks this holy man, whose only offence was that he had the courage to reprove sin in high places, remained in bonds, while Herod each day sought to find some excuse for releasing him without displeasing Herodias, of whose anger he stood in great fear, being as an abject slave from his love for her. At length the birthday of Herod arrived, and he conveyed word to John that in honour of the day he would send and bring him out of prison, so soon as he should obtain the consent of his wife, which he believed she would accord to him on such an anniversary.

Now, after the feast, Philippa, the daughter of Herodias and of her former husband Philip, came in and danced before Herod ; and being beautiful to behold and full of grace, she so pleased her step-father that, having drunk much wine with his guests, he cried with a great oath that he would give her whatsoever she would ask, were it the half of his

kingdom. Her mother then called her, and whispered some words to her.

"Then," said the maiden, turning towards Herod with the demand her mother had commanded her to make, "give me the head of John the Baptist in a charger."

When the Tetrarch heard this request he turned pale, and said, fiercely,

"Thy mother hath done this, girl." Herodias, however, betrayed no confusion, but sat unconcerned. It is said by those who were present, that Herod hesitated a long time, and at length said, "Ask the half of my kingdom, and I will give it thee; but let me not shed blood on my birthday."

"Wilt thou be false to thine oath?" asked his wife, scornfully.

"For mine oath's sake, and for those who have heard it, I will grant thy desire," he at length answered, with a sigh of regret and self-reproach. He then turned to the captain of the guard, and commanded him to slay John the Baptist in prison, and presently bring his head upon a charger.

At the end of a quarter of an hour, during which Herod appeared greatly troubled, walking up and down the floor, while his guests sat in silent expectation, the door opened, and the captain of the guard entered, followed by the executioner, who carried the brazen platter upon which lay the gory head of the eloquent forerunner of Christ.

"Give it to her!" cried Herod, sternly, waving him towards the beautiful but cruel and pitiless maiden, who stood near the inner door. The executioner placed the charger in her hands; and without turning pale, but with a smile of triumph, she bore it to her mother, who had retired to an inner chamber. It is said that, no sooner did she behold it, than she spat in the face, and, setting it up before her, reviled it. John's disciples, when they heard of his death, came to Herod and asked the body of the prophet, and taking it away, buried

it; but when they would have asked the head also of Herodias, she answered, "that she had given it to her dogs to devour." So terrible can be the revenge of a woman who fears not God!

The disciples of the murdered prophet then went to where Jesus was preaching and healing, and told him what had been done to John. "When Jesus heard of the death of John, He was very sorrowful," writes His disciple John to Mary, "and went away into a desert place apart, to mourn over the fate of His bold and holy forerunner." In the meanwhile, the disciples of John the Baptist, believing that the murder of their prophet was but the first blow of a general slaughter, fled, some hiding in the desert, while others sought Jesus, that He might protect and counsel them. At length He found Himself surrounded by a great multitude, chiefly of John's disciples, who had fled from the cities, besides many who had come to hear Him preach and be healed of Him. The place was a desert, and far from any town. Forgetful of all else save the words of Jesus, they were without food. "We who were His disciples," says John, writing to Rabbi Amos, "seeing this, suggested that Jesus should send the multitude away to the villages to buy themselves victuals. But Jesus answered us, and said—

"'They need not go away—give ye them to eat.'

"And Simon said, 'Master, where can we get bread for so many? There is verily here an army to be fed, and we have among us but five loaves and two small fishes.'

"Upon hearing this, Jesus said—

"'It is enough: bring them hither unto me.'

"We collected the bread and fishes, and I myself laid them on a rock before Jesus. He then said to us, 'Command the multitude to sit down on the grass.' And when they were all seated, He took the five loaves, and laying His hands upon them and upon the two fishes, He looked up to heaven and gave thanks; and then breaking them into

fragments, He gave them to us His disciples, and bade us distribute to the people. As often as we returned for more, we found the loaves and the fishes undiminished; and I saw with wonder how, when this Prophet of God broke off a piece of one of the fishes, or of a loaf, the same part was immediately seen thereon as if nothing had been separated; and in this manner he continued to break and distribute to us for nearly an hour, until all had eaten as much as they would, and were filled; and when none demanded more, and He ceased to break the bread and the fishes, He commanded us to gather up the fragments which remained, and there were twelve basketsful over and above what was needed. The number that were thus miraculously fed was above five thousand men, besides nearly an equal number of women and children. And this mighty Prophet, who could thus feed an army, voluntarily suffered during forty days and nights the pangs of hunger in the desert! He seems a man in suffering, but in creating power a God."

This wonderful miracle, my dear father, is one that has too many witnesses to be denied. He who could miraculously feed five thousand, could feed all men. Must not He, then, who could feed all mankind, be divine? Surely this must be the Son of God! If I should relate to you all the miracles which have been done by Him, I should fill many letters. Not a day passes but we hear of some still more wondrous manifestation of His power. Every morning, when men meet in the market-places or in the avenues of the Temple, the first question is, "What new wonder has He performed? Have you heard of another miracle of this mighty Prophet?" Indeed, so great is the desire here felt to see Jesus and to witness His miracles, that where one went to hear John preach in the wilderness of Jordan, ten go to see Christ in Galilee. The priests alone are offended, and speak evil of Him through envy. They complain that He draws off the people from the sacrifices; that He is preaching another law than that of Moses; that He eats with

sinner ; that He enters the houses of Samaritans ; and that He loveth Galilee rather than Jerusalem, which they declare to be an evidence that He is not the Christ who was "to come to the Temple and send forth His law from Jerusalem."

They have even gone so far as to say that He performs His miracles by magic, or by the aid of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils.

"If we suffer Him to take men's minds as He doth," said Caiaphas to Rabbi Amos yesterday, when he heard that Jesus had walked on the sea to join His disciples in their ship, and had stilled a tempest with a word, "the worship in the Temple will be at an end, and the sacrifice will cease. He draweth all men unto Him."

Herod, who hath, as I have said, slain John, hearing directly after of the fame of Jesus, said to Herodias,

"This is John the Baptist risen from the dead, and therefore do mighty works show forth themselves in him."

"If he arise from the dead threescore and ten times, I will as many times have his head," answered Herodias ; whereupon Herod privately sent to Jesus, supposing Him to be John the Baptist, desiring Him to remain in the parts of Galilee where He was. The Levites and Scribes of the city contend that He is Elias, who, it is prophesied, must come and restore all things before Shiloh come. Others believe that He is Isaiah, or Jeremiah, risen from the dead ; and some say one thing, and some another. They are willing to believe Jesus to be everything but that which He is—the true Christ and the Son of the Highest.

You have asked, dear father, in your letter, "Where is Elias, who is to prepare the way for Messias, according to the prophet Malachi ?" This question Jesus Himself has answered, John said, when a Rabbi put it to Him. He replied thus :

"Elias hath come already, and ye have done unto him whatsoever ye listed."

"Dost thou speak of John the Baptist?" asked those about Him, when they heard this.

"John came in the spirit and power of Elias, and therefore was he thus called by the prophet," was the answer of Jesus.

I have written to you mainly of the miracles of Jesus, dear father, as being evidences that witness of His divine power and authority to teach and to restore Israel. I have said little of His teaching, as I have not yet heard Him : but I have heard those who have listened to Him repeat many of the things He has taught them. Such words of wisdom, such pureness of teaching, such holy precepts and divine instruction, never before fell from the lips of man. Oh, when shall I be so blessed as to hear His voice, and ponder the depth of His words? I envy all who have heard Him speak.

I did not tell you that, besides the six disciples whom I have named, He has chosen six others ; and the twelve He keeps with Him as His favoured followers, whom He daily instructs in the doctrines He came down from heaven to teach. Of the thousands never weary of going from place to place in His train, He has also selected seventy men, whom He has despatched by twos into every city and village of Judæa, commanding them to proclaim that the kingdom of God is at hand, and that the time hath come when men everywhere should repent and turn to God.

Thus, you see, my dear father, that the solitary and unknown young man, who was baptised hardly a year since in Jordan, hath now more power in the land than the Roman Procurator Pilate, or than Herod. Nay, not many days since, after He had fed another multitude by a miracle, the people would by force have made Him a king ; but He withdrew from among them, and retired into a mountain alone, to escape this honour. Therefore, dear father, He is no leader covetous of glory. His kingdom, if He is to be a king, is not to be received as the gift of men. Yet that He will be a king is as certain as that He is the Christ : for the prophecy says that

Messias "shall sit upon the throne of His father David." Who can look into the future and behold the limit of His glory? Already by faith I see Him crowned by the same mighty God who hath proclaimed from heaven that He is His beloved Son, King of kings and Lord of lords; I behold His throne upon Mount Zion, and the nations of the earth tributary to His sceptre of righteousness, and submissive to His dominion that hath no limit. He is the Stone cut without hands out of a rock, that shall fill the whole earth.

You may charge me with being a dreamer, my dear father; but if Jesus be the Christ, earth has no language that can express the splendour of His reign.

It is now commonly reported that He will be here at the Passover. I shall then behold Him, and, like the wise men, I shall worship Him with mingled reverence and love. I will again write to you, dear father, after I have seen and heard Him. Till then adieu. Your loving

ADINA.

LETTER XVI.

MY DEAR FATHER,

While I write, the city is agitated like a stormy sea. The loud murmuring of the multitudes in the streets, and even in the distant market-place, reaches my startled ears. A squadron of Roman cavalry has just thundered past towards the Temple, where the uproar is greatest; for a rumour of an insurrection begun among the people has come to the ears of Pilate the Procurator. But this is no rising up against the Roman authority, dear father; alas! our people, who were once God's people and the masters of the East, are now too servile and submissive to their pagan masters, the Romans to

lift a finger to throw off their degrading yoke. Would that it were a revolt for the liberty of Judæa ! The occasion of the tumult, which seems to increase each moment, is a wondrous act of power on the part of the new Prophet Jesus—that name my pen hath made so familiar to you : a name at which I can say with truth every knee will yet bow, both of Jew and Gentile ! I will relate to you what hath been done ; for this manifestation of power from Him is another proof of His divine mission.

In my last letter, dear father, I stated how it was commonly reported that this wonderful man would be at the Passover, and that all men were talking of the approaching event, and thinking more of His presence here than of the feast itself. Nay, it was said that many who would not otherwise have been in Jerusalem would come hither in order to see Him and to witness some new miracle ; and to-day Rabbi Amos says the number of strangers in the city is greater than hath ever yet been beheld.

Yesterday, Mary's cousin John returned, and came unexpectedly into the hall of the fountain, behind the house, where we were all seated in the cool of the vines with which Mary has covered a wall of lattice-work. My uncle Amos was in the act of reading to us from the prophet Jeremiah a prophecy relating to the Messias that is to come (nay, that *is* come, dear father), when John appeared. Mary's blushes welcomed him, and showed how dear he was to her. Uncle Amos embraced and kissed him, and seated him by us, and called for a servant to bathe his feet, for he was dusty and travel-stained. From him we learned that his beloved master, Jesus, had reached Bethany, and was resting from His labours at the hospitable though humble house of Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. When we heard this, we all rejoiced, and uncle Amos especially seemed to be filled with gladness.

"If He come into Jerusalem," said he, eagerly, "He shall be my guest. Bid Him to my roof, O John, that my house-

hold may be blessed in having a Prophet of God step across its threshold."

"And see thou forget not to ask Him to remain through the Passover with us," cried Mary, earnestly looking up into the young disciple's face, and laying her hand trustfully upon his wrist.

"I will tell my beloved Master thy wish, Rabbi Amos," answered John. "Doubtless, as He has no home nor friends in the city, He will abide under your roof."

"Say not He hath no friends!" I exclaimed. "We are all His friends here, and fain would be His disciples."

"What! Rabbi Amos also?" cried John, with a look of pleasure and astonishment at the venerable priest of God.

"Yes, I am ready, after all I have heard and seen,—I am ready to confess Him a prophet sent from God."

"He is far more than a prophet, O Rabbi Amos!" answered John. "Never prophet did the works Jesus does. It seems that all power is given to Him. If you witnessed what I witness daily, as He traverses Judæa, you would say that He was Jehovah descended to earth in human form!"

"Nay, blaspheme not, young man," said Rabbi Amos, with some severity of reproof.

John bowed his head in reverence to the rebuke of the Rabbi, but nevertheless answered respectfully and firmly,

"Never man did the works that He doeth. If He be not God in the flesh, He is an angel invested with divine power."

"If He be the Messiah," I said, "He cannot be an angel; for are not the prophecies clear that the Messiah shall be 'a man of sorrows?' Is He not to be 'the seed of the woman?' a man and not an angel?"

"Yes," answered John; "you say well: thus promise the prophecies. I verily believe Jesus to be the Messiah, the Son of God. Yet, what He is more than man, what He is less than

God, I cannot understand, nor can my fellow-disciples. We wonder, love, and adore! At one moment we feel as though we could embrace Him as a brother dearly beloved; at another we are ready to fall at His feet and worship Him. I have seen Him weep at beholding the miseries of the diseased wretches who were dragged into His presence, and then heal them with a touch—with a word; and they would stand before Him in the strength and beauty of health and manhood. I have seen Him, with such a voice of command as never man had, drive out devils from those who were possessed by them; and I have heard the devils submissively beg not to be sent to their own place, but to be permitted by Him to roam still in the air and on the earth, until the hour when their final sentence shall proceed from the lips of God. Even the devils are thus subject unto Him, so mighty is His power; and all diseases disappear before His eye, like the foul mists of night before the beams of the morning sun!"

"And yet," said Nicodemus, a rich Pharisee, who had entered as John was first speaking, and listened, without interrupting—for it is his wont to come in and out as he will, being a friend of my uncle—"and yet, young man, I heard you say that Jesus, of whom you and all men relate such mighty deeds, has remained at Bethany to recover from His weariness. How can a man who hath the power to cure all manner of sickness be subject to mere weariness of body? I would say unto him, Physician, heal thyself!"

This was spoken with a tone of incredulity by this learned ruler of the Jews; and, stroking his snowy beard, he waited to hear the reply of John. Like many of the chief men, nay, most of them, he was slow to believe all he heard of Jesus; for as yet he had not seen Him, nor would he be likely to visit Him, in order to see for himself, lest his fame among the Jews should be diminished; for he is a man covetous of power, and aims one day to be chief ruler of the people; therefore, though he should really be convinced that Jesus is Messias, I think he

would not have candour enough to confess it, for fear of the Jews. Such is my opinion of my uncle's friend, the rich and powerful Pharisee. John answered him, and said,

"So far as I can learn the character of Jesus, His healing power over diseases is not for His own good, but for the benefit of the multitude. He uses His power to work miracles of love and compassion for others, and to show forth the divine power in Him. His miracles He useth solely as proofs of His Messiahship. Being a man with this divine power dwelling in Him for us, He is subject to infirmities as a man: He hungers, thirsts, is weary, suffers, as a man. I have seen Him heal a nobleman's son and restore him to strength and activity by a word, and the next moment seat Himself, supporting His aching head upon His hand, looking pale and languid, and without strength; for His labours of love are vast, and He is often overcome with weariness, those who follow Him to be healed not giving Him time to repose at night. Once Simon Peter, seeing Him ready to sink with very weakness after healing all day, approached Him and said,

"Master, thou givest strength to others; why suffer Thyself to be weary, when all health and strength are in Thee as in a living well?"

"It is not mine to escape human weakness by any power my Father hath bestowed upon me for the good of men. It behoves me to suffer all things. Through suffering only can I draw all men after me."

John said this so mournfully, as if he were repeating the very tones in which Jesus had spoken it, that we all remained silent for a few moments. I felt tears fill my eyes, and I was glad to see that the proud Pharisee, Nicodemus, looked moved. After a minute's serious pause, he said,

"This man is doubtless no common prophet. When he comes into the city I shall be glad to hear his doctrines from his own mouth, and to witness some potent miracle."

"Surely," said Amos, "if He be in truth a prophet, we ought

not to reject Him. We ought to examine fairly His claims to be called a man sent from God to our people."

"Thou hast spoken well," answered Nicodemus. "We Pharisees are ready to give him a fair hearing. It would seem that by coming to Jerusalem from the distant regions where hitherto he has been preaching and doing miracles, he means to call upon the whole people to acknowledge him as a prophet."

"A prophet He is, without doubt," answered Amos. "It is not the question now whether He be a prophet or not; for the hundreds He has healed are living witnesses that He has the spirit and power of the prophets, and is truly one of them. The question that remains is, whether He be the MESSIAS or not?"

Nicodemus slowly shook his head, as one that doubts, and then answered,

"Messias cometh not out of Galilee."

"He will prove Himself the Messias with power," answered my cousin John, zealously. "When you hear Him speak, Rabbi Nicodemus, the grace of His lips and the depth of His wisdom will lead you to belief, and without seeing His miracles you will acknowledge that He is the Christ."

At this moment a sudden, wild, joyful cry from Mary startled us all, and, looking towards the door, we saw her folded in the arms of a young man whom I had never seen before. My surprise had not time to form itself into any question concerning what I saw, when I beheld the young man, who was exceedingly comely, and of a ruddy countenance, after kissing the clinging Mary upon her cheeks, leave her to throw himself into the arms of Rabbi Amos, crying,

"My father, my dear father!"

My uncle, who had stood amazed, gazing on him wonderingly, as if he could not believe what his eyes beheld, now burst into loud outcries of grateful joy, and he clasped the

young stranger to his heart, and fell upon his neck and wept, with scarcely power to sob forth the words—

"My son! my son! Lost, but found again! This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes."

John also embraced the new-comer, while the ruler stood silent with wonder. Who the young man was whose arrival was producing such joy, and why he should be hailed as a son by my uncle Amos, I knew not; and while I was looking bewildered upon the scene, Mary ran and said to me, with tears of gladness shining in her dark eyes,

"It is Benjamin, my lost brother, beloved Adina!"

"I did not know you had a brother," I answered, in amazement.

"We have long regarded him as dead," she replied. "Seven years ago he became lunatic, and fled to the tombs without the city, where he has long dwelt with many others who were possessed with devils. For years he has been a madman, and has neither spoken to us nor known us; and we have tried to forget that he lived, since to remember it made us miserable, for we had no hope that he would be healed. But, oh! now—now behold him! It seems like a vision! See how manly, how noble, how like himself he is, with no madness in his smiling eyes!"

She then flew to take him by the hand and lead him towards me, all eyes being fixed upon him as if he had been a spirit.

When he saw their wondering gaze, he said,

"It is I, your son and brother, O ye dearest! I am in my right mind, and am made whole."

"Who has done this wondrous work upon thee, O my son?" asked Rabbi Amos, with trembling lips, while he kept his hand on Benjamin's shoulder, as if he feared his son would vanish away.

"It was Jesus, the Prophet of the Highest," answered Benjamin, with solemn gratitude.

"Jesus!" we all exclaimed in one voice.

"I could have said so," answered John, calmly. "I needed not to ask who had wrought this great work upon him. Rabbi Nicodemus, thou knowest this young man well! Thou hast known him in childhood, and beheld him in the raging of his lunacy among the tombs. Dost thou doubt now that Jesus is the very Christ?"

Nicodemus made no reply; but I saw from his face that he believed.

"How was this thing done to thee, young man?" he asked, with deep and visible emotion.

"I was wandering near Bethany this morning," answered the restored one, with meek simplicity, "when I beheld a crowd which I followed in my madness. As I drew near, I beheld in their midst a man, upon whom I had no sooner cast my eyes than I felt upon me an ungovernable desire to destroy him. The same fury possessed seven others, my comrades in madness; and with one mind and will, together we rushed upon him, with great stones and knives in our hands. The crowd gave way and fell back terrified, and called him to beware. But he moved not; standing alone with a wide circle round him, he stood calmly awaiting us. We were within a few feet of him, and I was nearest, ready to strike him to the earth, when he quietly lifted one finger, and said, 'Peace!' We stood motionless, without power to stir a foot, while our rage and hatred increased with our impotence to harm him. We howled and foamed at the mouth before him, for we then knew that he was the Son of God, come to destroy us.

"Come out of the men, and depart quickly!" He said, in a tone of command as if to us, but really to the demons that held us captive. At this word I fell at His feet in a dreadful convulsion, and my whole body writhed as if it had been wrestling with an invisible foe. Jesus then stooped, and laid His hand upon my brow, and said,

"Son, arise. Thou art made whole."

"At these words a black cloud seemed to be lifted from my mind: the glory of a new existence appeared to dawn upon my soul, while His voice melted my heart within me. With joyful tears, the first I have shed for seven years, I fell at His feet and kissed and embraced them, wholly overcome with a new sense of peace—a feeling of inward happiness unspeakable.

"Go thy way, and fear God, that thou fall not a second time into this captivity to Satan,' He said, raising me to my feet. I then followed Him, rejoicing and blessing God, until He entered the house of a centurion, near Bethany, when I hastened hither, to gladden your hearts with the sight of me made whole and in my right mind."

When Benjamin had done speaking, we all gave glory to God, who had restored him to us, and who had sent so great a Prophet among men. As the master in Israel took his leave, I overheard him, in congratulating the happy father, say that he should seek an occasion to talk with Jesus; and when my uncle told him that he hoped to receive the mighty Prophet as his guest, the ruler desired permission to visit Him here upon His arrival; "but let it be secretly," I heard him add in Rabbi Amos's ear as he went away.

I commenced this letter, dearest father, by speaking of a great commotion which is moving the whole city, and which was caused by an act of power done by the Prophet Jesus, who this morning, two hours ago, entered the city, and proceeded at once to the Temple, followed through the streets by such a multitude as was never known in Jerusalem before. But as I have filled so much of this letter with the story of what was done yesterday in the hall of the fountain, I will leave the account of the tumult, the noise of which is still to be heard, for my next letter, which I shall write this evening; for now that all events that happen concerning the great Prophet Christ touch us so nearly, I shall write to you almost daily, that I may give you tidings of all things that

come to pass, even as you desired me to do. The request from you, dear father, that I should do thus, filled me with joy. It was an assurance to me that you have begun to ponder these wonderful things concerning Messiah, and leads me secretly to hope that you may yet believe in Him, and accept Him as the ANOINTED ONE of God ; for such without doubt He is, as both His words and His mighty works do testify.

When I have prepared a package of letters, I shall send them by Israel Ben Judah, with the caravan that departs eight days after the Passover.

May the God of our fathers be with you, and bless you, and the holy people of the promise.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XVII.

MY DEAR FATHER,

The letter which I last sent you was written during a marvellous tumult which prevailed in the city, an account whereof I promised to give you in the present letter. I will do so now. When on the morning of the Passover, it was noised abroad that the Prophet of Galilee was entering the city by the Gate of Jericho, the whole city was stirred, and from houses and shops poured forth crowds, turning their steps to the gate where He was expected. Mary went with me to the house-top, hoping to see something ; but far and near we beheld only a sea of heads, from which arose a deep murmuring like the ceaseless voice of the ocean upon a rocky shore. The top of the gateway was visible from the place where we stood, but it was black with the people who had

crowded upon it to look down. There was heard at length an immense shout as of one voice, which was followed by a swaying and a pressing onward of the crowds.

"The Prophet must have entered the gate," said my cousin Mary, eagerly. "How they run to do Him honour! It is a greeting meet for a king."

We hoped He would pass by our house, as we lived in one of the chief streets, but were disappointed, as He took the way round the foot of Mount Zion, and mounted the Hill of Moriah to the Temple. A part of the ascent to the house of the Lord is visible from our roof, and we had the joy of seeing the Prophet at a distance. We knew Him only because He was in advance of the rest, and the people, while they walked near Him, yet left a little space clear about Him. The nearest to Him, Mary said, was her cousin John, though at that distance I could not have known him; but the eyes of maidenly affection, though mild as the dove's, are piercing as the eagle's. The foremost of the multitude disappeared beneath the arch of the Temple, and thousands upon thousands followed after; and behind the rest rode the young Roman centurion, of whom I have before spoken, at the head of four hundred horse, to keep order in the vast mass. Mary did not know him, and said it was too far to tell who he was; but I knew him, not only by his appearance and bearing, but by the scarlet pennon that fluttered from his iron lance, and which I had bestowed upon him; for he told me he had lost one his fair Roman sister Tullia had given him, and as he greatly mourned its loss, I supplied its place by another, worked by my own hands. As this was an act of kindness only to a stranger, dearest father, I know you will not be wroth thereat; though being done for an idolater, it may not please you. But I am full of hope, dear father, that this noble and excellent youth may yet become a Jew; for he loves to listen to my teachings from the prophets, and last week he told me he could never weary of hearing me

read to him from the Books of Moses, and from the sublime Psalms of King David, which, he says, surpass any poems, either in his own tongue or the Greek. Thus, by patience and reasoning, I assuredly believe that he may be led to renounce his idolatry and become a worshipper of the God of Hosts.

As many of the multitude as could gain admission having entered the great gate of the Temple, for a few minutes there was a profound stillness. Mary said,

"He is worshipping or sacrificing now."

"Perhaps," I said, "He is addressing the people, and they listen to His words."

While I was speaking there arose from the Temple a loud, irregular, strange outcry of a thousand voices, as of men at strife. The people without the gate answered by a universal shout, and then we beheld those nearest the walls retreat down the hill-side in terror and confusion; while, to increase the tumult, the Roman horse charged up the hill, seeking to penetrate the masses, and to reach the gate out of which the people poured like a living and storm-tossed river, before whose advance the head of the cohort recoiled, or was overwhelmed and down-trodden. I held my breath in dreadful suspense, not knowing the cause of the fearful scene we beheld, nor what might be its end. Mary, who knew that both her father and her cousin were exposed to whatsoever danger was threatening those who had gone into the Temple, was overcome by her fear that evil would befall them, and, burying her face in her hands, she sank down almost fainting by my side. My attention was then drawn to her away from the scene on Mount Moriah: I led her down into the apartments of the house and saw no more of what followed. But a quarter of an hour had not passed when young Samuel Ben Azel, who had the day before come up from Nain to the Passover, with his mother, who is a distant relative of Rabbi Amos, entered, and explained to us the cause of the scene

I had beheld, assuring Mary, at the same time, of the safety both of her cousin and her father. This was his account :

"The Prophet Jesus, having entered into the Temple, the multitudes following Him to see what He would do, found all the courts filled with merchants, money-changers, and sellers of cattle and of doves to the sacrificers. Portions of the sacred place were divided off by fences, in which hundreds of sheep and cattle were stalled ; and between almost every two columns of the vast portico sat at their tables men whose business it was to change into Jewish and Roman coin—which only the sellers of the cattle and sheep will receive for what they sell—the foreign money brought from Greece, Egypt, Elam, Parthia, and Africa by the Jews who had come up to the Passover. On His way to the inner Temple, the Prophet found His progress so obstructed by the stalls and by the tables of the traffickers, that He had to go round them, and often to turn back and take a more open path. At length, finding upon the very lintel of the Court of the Priests a priest himself engaged at a table as a money-changer, and near him a Levite keeping a stall for selling doves and sparrows to the worshippers, He stopped upon the step, and turning round, cast His calm, terrible eye—for it was terrible then, mild as it was before—over the scene of noisy commerce and bartering. Every face was turned towards Him in expectation. The half-completed bargain was delayed, and buyer and seller looked steadfastly upon Him as by a sort of necessity, not unmingled with a strange awe and fear. Those who had crowded around Him drew back farther and farther, slowly but surely widening the space between them and Him, they knew not wherefore, till He stood alone, save that near Him remained John, His disciple. The uproar of the buying and selling suddenly ceased, and even the loud lowing of the cattle and the bleating of the sheep stopped, as if at His presence an unearthly awe had seized even the beasts that perish ; and only the

soft cooing of doves stirred the vast, death-like stillness of the place which a moment before had been full of oaths, cries, shouts, of running to and fro, buying and selling, the ringing of money, and the buzz of ten thousand voices. It was as if a tempest, sweeping with deafening uproar over the lashed ocean, had been suddenly stopped, and followed by a great calm. The silence was dreadful. It stopped the very beating of my heart. Every eye in the vast multitude seemed fastened on the Prophet in expectation of some dread event. I thought of the world hereafter to be assembled before the tribunal of Jehovah, awaiting its sentence. The step of the Temple upon which He stood seemed to be a throne, and the people before Him appeared to expect judgment. Suddenly the silence was broken by a young man near me, who cried out with a piercing shriek, and fell as one dead upon the marble floor. There was a general thrill of horror, yet the same awful stillness continued. That one intense shriek had spoken for us all—it had given speech and language to what we all felt. Suddenly the voice of the Prophet was heard, clear, authoritative, and ringing like the trumpet that shook Sinai when the Law was given, and made all the people to quake :

“‘It is written, My house shall be called a house of prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves.’

“He then took up from the pavement at His feet a small cord, which some man had thrown down, and doubling it in the form of a scourge, He advanced. Before His presence fled the money-changers, the priests and Levites, the sellers of oxen, of sheep, and of doves, escaping in such haste from the terrible wrath of His countenance that they left their goods to their fate, seeking only safety for themselves.

“‘Take these things hence,’ cried the Prophet : ‘make not my Father’s house a house of merchandise.’

“Such a scene of confusion and flight as now followed

no eye had yet beheld. The whole crowd was flying. I was borne along with the rest. The money-tables were overturned, but not the most avaricious dealer there thought at that moment of stopping to gather any of the gold and silver which the rushing thousands trampled beneath their feet. It was not the whip of small cords before which we fled, for He touched no man therewith; but it was from His presence! We were driven like chaff before Him. To the eyes of all the little whip seemed to blaze and flash above their heads like the fiery sword of a destroying angel. Nothing was seen but terror, flight, and escape. In a few moments the Priests' Court of the Temple was cleared of every soul, and we were driven across the Court of Israel and the broader Court of the Gentiles, towards the south gate. When I looked back, I saw that the Prophet followed not, but stood alone, the master and lord of the Temple. The scourge was no longer in His hand, and His whole aspect and countenance were changed from their look of terrible power to one of the deepest compassion, as he looked after us still flying from His presence.

"But I had no time to marvel at this wondrous change for the multitude still sought to escape, and bore me onward and I saw no more of the mighty Prophet. At the gate we were met by a cohort of Pilate's cavalry, and pressed backward into the Temple. The scene now became appalling. Checked by the Roman spears in front, and fearing to face the Prophet, the multitude, doubtful which way to go, trod one upon another, trampled the weak under foot, and filled the air with curses, shrieks, and horrible outcries of mingled pain, rage, and terror. How I escaped I know not," added Samuel, as he concluded his narration; "but when I found myself outside the gate with hundreds of others, I sought shelter in the city; and happy am I to have reached this place of security, for the Romans are scouring the streets, driving all the people into their houses."

"But no man dared approach the Prophet, whose mighty power had so recently been expressed in the driving forth of the merchants and buyers from that sacred place.

"'Bear ye witness,' then said He, sorrowfully rather than in wrath, 'that I have come unto my own, and ye received me not ! This Temple of my Father, from which you would drive me forth, shall no longer be the dwelling-place and abode of Jehovah. The day cometh when your priesthood shall be taken away and given to others, and among the Gentiles shall arise to my Father's name, on every hill and in every valley of the earth, holy temples, wherein He shall delight to dwell ; and men shall no longer need to worship God in Zion, but in all places shall prayer and praise be offered to the Most High. This Temple, which ye have polluted, shall be overthrown, and ye shall be scattered among the nations, because ye knew not the time of God's mercy.'"

Thus speaking, the Prophet departed from the Temple, leaving the High Priest, and the priests and Levites, standing gazing after Him, without power to utter a word. Rabbi Amos, who saw and heard all this, says that mighty was the contrast between the two men, the High Priest and Jesus—if it be lawful to call Him a man, dear father—as they talked with each other : the one clothed in magnificent garments, with a glittering crown upon his brows, his countenance lofty and proud, his hair and beard white as snow, and his whole appearance majestic and splendid with outward richness ; the other youthful, clad in coarse garments, with a grey Galilean mantle folded about Him, with worn sandals upon His feet, and His whole garb mean, and covered with the dust of His journey on foot from Bethany ; while the severe sadness of His face, which seemed beautifully chastened by prayer and suffering, contrasted with the stern, harsh face of Caiaphas, flushed with anger and envious hostility.

"He passed out of the Temple with an even pace, neither looking back at His enemies nor followed by them. I beheld John following Him, and hastened to ask that disciple to invite Him to my house, to sojourn and eat the Passover with me ; but he disappeared, and I lost sight of him. But at the gate I encountered a man leaping and singing, whom the Prophet had healed by a touch as He passed out, though the man had been paralytic for nearly thirty years. Thus this mighty Prophet never ceases to do good."

This, my dear father, is the account given by Rabbi Amos of what passed in the Temple. That Jesus *is* the CHRIST is now beyond question, for He has openly declared it to the High Priest.

Farewell, dearest father. The servants are bringing in green boughs for the booths, and I close this letter, with prayers to our fathers' God for your peace and welfare.

ADINA.

LETTER XVIII.

MY DEAR FATHER,

The last letter which I received by the hands of the Roman courier filled me with gratitude, for from it I learned that you are once more well. When I heard from Ben Israel concerning your sickness, I longed to fly with the wings of a dove to your pillow, that I might minister to you and comfort you. The God of our fathers be praised that hath raised you up ; and I pray daily that He may preserve you long to me.

You write me word, dear father, that you have read diligently all my letters, and more especially those which relate to Jesus of Galilee, the mighty Prophet now vouchsafed to

Israel. You tell me that you are ready to acknowledge Him as a prophet sent from God, for you add, "evidently no man could do such great works except God were with him." But you continue to say, "While I am ready, my child, to recognise him as a prophet of the Lord, I am far from seeing in him the Messiah promised to our people! Apart from the lowliness of his parentage and his humility of condition, travelling on foot, and without retinue (while Messiah is to be a Prince and King), he can have no claim to be the Christ, because he comes out of Galilee. Doth Messiah come out of Galilee? Let Rabbi Amos, who seems ready, I perceive, to acknowledge him as the Christ, let him examine the writings of the prophets, and see if these things be so. Hath not the Scripture said that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, David's city? Search and take heed, for no prophet, much less Messiah, cometh out of Galilee."

To this objection, dear father, which you moreover made (and I answered) in a previous letter, Rabbi Amos desires me to reply, that he has investigated the records of births kept in the Temple, and finds, as I have before named to you, that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. The Prophet afterwards removed with His parents to Egypt, and thence returning to Judæa, settled in Galilee, where He was brought up. That these things are true, not only is Rabbi Amos satisfied, but Nicodemus also, whose learning you will not gainsay; and the latter, very much to our surprise, and my own delight, added yesterday, when we were talking of Jesus at supper—

"There is a prophecy, O Rabbi Amos, which strengthens this mighty Prophet's claim to be the Messiah."

"What is it? Let me hear all that can strengthen His claim!" I asked, earnestly; not, dear father, that my confidence in him needs confirmation, but that I wish others also to believe.

"You will find it in the prophet Hoseas," answered Nicodemus, "and thus we read it: 'I have called my son out of Egypt.' These words refer to Messias, without question, as say all the doctors of the law."

"It is a new argument for Jesus," answered Rabbi Amos.

My heart bounded with joy, dear father, at hearing this prophecy repeated; but judge how I was moved when Nicodemus, taking the roll of the prophet Isaiah in his hand, read the words that follow, as written concerning Jesus: "Beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles, the people which sat in darkness have seen a great light." This changes the objection to His coming from Galilee, into further proof of His claim to be the Messias.

I hear you now ask, dear father, as many of the rich and powerful citizens of Jerusalem have asked, "Have the rulers begun to believe in Him?" Yes, Nicodemus does begin to believe that He is the Christ, being more and more assured of it the farther he examines the divine Scriptures. Oh, my dear father, that you should see Jesus, and hear Him speak, as I have done! All your doubts would then vanish away, and you would be willing to sit at His feet, and learn of Him the words of life. How shall I describe Him—how shall I cause you to see and hear Him, as I have heard and seen?

In my last letter I told you that Rabbi Amos had invited Him to sojourn with us during the Passover. John, the cousin of Mary, conveyed to Him the invitation of my uncle, and He graciously accepted it, and came hither yesterday, after he had quitted the Temple, from whence He had, with such commanding power, driven forth the merchants and money-changers.

We were expecting Him, when I heard the rumour flying along the streets, "The Prophet comes! the Prophet comes!" On hearing these words uttered by hundreds of voices of men and children, I hastened to the house-top, from whence

I could behold the street to the foot of the Temple. I looked down upon a sea of heads. The multitude came rolling onward like a mighty river—as I have seen the dark Nile flow when it pours its freshening floods along its banks.

Mary stood by my side. We tried to single out, amid the advancing throng, the form of Him around whom undulated the sea of heads, and whose progress gave occasion to so mighty a stir. But all was so wildly confused through the waving of palm branches that we could behold nothing clearly. While I was straining my gaze to discern the form of the Prophet Mary touched me, and bade me look towards the other side. As I did so, I beheld Æmilius Tullius, the young Roman centurion of whom I have before spoken, now prefect of Pilate's Legion, advancing at the head of about two hundred horsemen at full speed, to meet and to turn back the advancing throng of people.

As he came opposite the house he looked up, and seeing us upon the parapet, waved his gleaming sword and saluted us, and was dashing past, when Mary cried out—

"Noble sir, there is no insurrection, as some of the people have doubtless told thee : this vast crowd moving hitherward is but an escort to the Prophet of Nazareth, who cometh to be my father's guest."

"I have orders from Pilate to arrest him, lady, as a disturber of the peace of the city," replied the centurion, who had drawn rein, and paused to speak with Mary.

"Shall a prophet suffer because his mighty deeds draw crowds after his footsteps, noble Roman? If thy troops advance there will be a tumult of the people. If thou wilt withdraw them a little, thou shalt see that when the Prophet crosses my father's threshold, the crowd will immediately go away in peace."

The prefect replied not, but seemed to look at me, expecting me to speak, which seeing, I earnestly entreated him to do the Prophet no violence.

"For thy wishes' sake, lady, I will here halt my troop; the more so as I see that the people are unarmed."

The centurion then gave orders to his horsemen that they should draw up in line opposite the house. The multitude now came near; but many of those in advance, seeing the Roman horse, stopped, or fell into the rear, so that I beheld Jesus appear in front, walking at an even pace, with John at His side; Rabbi Amos was also with Him. As He came nigh, the people, for fear of the long Roman spears, kept back, and He advanced almost alone. I saw John point out to Him our house. The Prophet looked up, and gazed upon it an instant. I saw His features plainly: His countenance was not that of a young man, but of one past the middle age of life, though He is but thirty years old. His hair was mingled with grey, and in His finely shaped oval face deep lines were carved, evidences of care and sorrow. His flowing beard fell upon His breast. His eyes appeared to be fixed upon us both for an instant with a look of benignity and peace. Deep sadness, gentle not stern, seemed to be the expression of His noble and princely visage. There was an air of manly dignity in His carriage and mien; and as He walked amid His followers He appeared truly a king; yet simplicity and humility qualified this native majesty of port. He seemed to draw out both the awe and love of those who saw Him—to command equally our obedience and sympathy.

As He drew near to where the Roman prefect sat upon his horse, the Prophet inclined His head slightly, but with a perfect courtesy, to the young chief, who bent low to his saddle-bow in acknowledgment, as if to a monarch. We were both surprised and highly gratified at this act of homage from the Roman centurion to our Prophet, and I thought more kindly than ever of Æmilius.

Passing the troop of horse, John and Rabbi Amos conducted Jesus to our door; but before they reached it there

was a loud cry from several harsh voices, calling upon the Roman to arrest Him. On looking to see from whence these shouts came, I found that they proceeded from several of the priests, headed by Annas, who were pressing forward through the crowd, crying with threatening words—

“We call upon thee, O prefect, to arrest this man! Shame on thee, Rabbi Amos! Hast thou also believed in the impostor? We charge this Galilean, O Roman, with having raised a sedition. He has taken possession of the Temple, and unless you see to it, he will take the citadel out of your hands. If you arrest him not, upon your head be the consequences that may befall the city and the people.”

“I see nothing to fear from this man, O ye Jews,” answered Æmilius. “He is unarmed, and without soldiers. Stand back; keep to your Temple! It is from your outcries all this confusion comes! Back to your altars! If commotions arise in the city, Pilate will demand the cause of you. All the rest of the people are peaceable, save only yourselves.”

“We will carry our complaint before the Procurator,” cried Annas, who was the chief speaker; and, followed by a large company of angry priests and Levites, with staves in their hands, he took his way towards the palace of the Roman Governor.

I looked thankfully upon Æmilius, who had so fearlessly taken part with the Prophet.

The multitude now began to give way as the Roman horse moved slowly up the street, and Jesus being received into the house by Mary, who descended to open the door, peace was soon in a measure restored; though at one time a large concourse of persons, whose money-tables had been cast down, came to complain of their losses, and would have attacked the house but for Rabbi Amos, who went forth and courteously addressed them, showing them that if they had sold and bought in the Temple contrary to the law, and if Jesus alone had driven them forth, He must be a prophet,

for only a prophet could make a thousand men flee before him. "And if He be a prophet, my friends," continued the Rabbi, "He has acted by command of God; and take heed, lest in avenging yourselves ye be found fighting against the Lord of the Temple!"

With such words he sent them away; though many sick, lame, halt, blind, and infirm, as well as a group of lepers, stood a long time without, calling upon the prophet to come forth, and touch them and heal them.

In the meanwhile, Jesus was conducted into the inner hall; and water being brought, Rabbi Amos himself removed His sandals, and reverently washed His feet; while Mary, to do Him all honour, dried them with a rich veil, which she had just worked in preparation for her coming marriage with her cousin John. It was at this moment I entered the hall. Desirous as I had been to see and speak with the Prophet, now that I beheld Him face to face, I shrank back in awe. He raised His eyes, and beholding me, said—

"Daughter, come thou also and bid me welcome with these dear friends; for I know thou believest in me, and desirest that thy father also should believe. Be patient, and hope; for thou shalt yet behold him whom thou lovest become my disciple."

As He thus spake He extended to me His hand, upon which I let fall tears of joy like rain. I perceived that He knew my heart and thoughts, and felt assured that His words would prove true. Yes, dear father, *you* also will believe, as we all believe! You also will acknowledge Him as the Christ!

There were in the room not only Amos, and John, and Mary, but the priest Elias, cousin to Caiaphas, who, desirous of hearing from the lips of the Prophet His sublime teachings, had come with Him. There were also present five men whom I never saw before, but who, John told me, were His disciples. One of them was tall and thin, with high, eager

features, a bold brow and an eagle eye, with an air of singular determination, like a soldier. His name was Simon Peter. Another was a very thoughtful-looking person, with a calm, pensive air, who seemed to hang on every word His Master uttered, as if he were listening to the very oracles of God. His name was Andrew, and he is brother to Simon. But I had no eye nor ear for any but Jesus. I saw that He seemed weary and pale; and for the first time I noticed He seemed to be in pain, as from time to time He raised His hand to His temples. Desirous of serving so holy a person, I hastened to prepare a restorative, and, bringing it into the hall, I was about to give it to Him, when the priest Elias put me rudely back, and said—

“Nay, maiden, let us witness a miracle!” He then turned to the Prophet, and said, “Master, we have heard much of thy power to work miracles, but have seen none wrought by thee. If thou wilt presently show me a miracle, I will believe, I and all my house. Thou hast a pain in thy forehead; heal it with a touch, and I will acknowledge thee the Christ, the Son of the living God!”

Jesus turned His eyes upon him, and said—

“Elias, thou readest the prophets, and shouldst know whether He who speaketh unto thee is the Christ or no. Search the Scriptures, that thou mayest know that the time of His visitation has come, and that I am He. One prophecy fulfilled is more worth than many miracles. But I do no miracles to relieve my own pain. I came into this world to suffer. Isaiah wrote of me as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Blessed are they who, not seeing, shall believe. Ye believe that I am a prophet, and come forth from God. It is well. Shall a prophet, then, deceive? If I am a prophet—and ye doubt it not—and I say that I am also the Christ, why will ye not believe me? If I am a true prophet come from God, I cannot deceive. Yet ye believe me when I say I am a prophet, and ye are displeased if I say that I am the

Christ. If ye believe me at all, then believe what I say unto you, that I am the Christ."

"But, Master," said the aged Levite, Asher, "we know whence thou art—even from Galilee. Yet when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is."

"It is true, O man of Israel, ye both know me and whence I am. Yet ye know not Him who sent me. Ye do not understand the Scriptures, or ye would indeed know me, and whence I am, and who hath sent me, for I am come forth from God. If ye had known Him, ye would know me also. The time cometh when ye shall know whence I am, and believe in me; but now your hearts are darkened through ignorance and unbelief. I have told you plainly I am the Christ."

When He had thus spoken with great strength and power, there were many present who were offended, and some voices murmured against Him. Then Rabbi Amos led Him forth to the chamber he had prepared for Him; but the people remained discoursing of the matter, and were greatly divided about Him, some saying that He was Christ, and others denying it; while others again cried aloud that He wrought His miracles by Beelzebub, prince of the devils.

"And thus," said my cousin John to me, bitterly, "thus they speak wherever my beloved Master goes. Detraction and envy, malice and unbelief, follow His footsteps, and daily His life is threatened, and no place is a place of shelter for His aching head."

In going to His chamber, the Prophet had to cross the court; and as I was watching His retiring footsteps, I saw four men, who had climbed to the house-top from the side street, the doors being closed, let down a fifth in a blanket at the very feet of Jesus. It was their own father, a man stricken with the palsy. Jesus, seeing their filial love, stopped and said kindly—

"Young men, what would ye have me to do?"

"Heal our aged father, O holy Rabbi."

"Believe ye that I can do this?" He asked, fixing His eyes steadfastly on them.

"Yea, Lord! we believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God! All things are possible unto Thee."

Jesus looked benignantly upon them, and then taking the sick man by the hand, He said to him in a loud voice, so that all who were looking on heard Him—

"I say unto thee, arise and walk!"

The palsied man instantly rose to his feet, whole and strong; and after casting a joyful glance around, he threw himself at the Prophet's feet, and bathed them with his tears. The four sons followed their father's example, while all the people who witnessed the miracle shouted, "Glory to God, who hath given such power unto men!"

Jesus then withdrew Himself from the thanks of the grateful sons, who now, embracing their father, wept upon his neck; and then the whole four escorted the healed one, two on each side, with their arms about him and about each other, into the street, where they were received by the multitude with loud cries of welcome; for the old man had been well known in the city by all men, as one palsied and unable to walk for many years.

Such, my dear father, are the increasing testimonies Jesus brings, by miracles as well as by words, that He is indeed Messias.

The God of our fathers keep you in health.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XIX.

MY DEAR FATHER,

The visit of the Prophet Jesus to the city hath brought forth fruit abundantly. His numerous miracles, performed in open day by a word or by a look, by a touch or a command; the power of His preaching; the excellency of His doctrines, which are manifestly divine; His clear assertion that He is the very CHRIST, have all worked together to bring the first men of Israel, rulers as well as people, to believe in Him! During the four days He sojourned at the house of my uncle Amos, the chief men of the city came to hear Him, and, haply, to see some miracle performed by Him. The priesthood are divided. Caiaphas has publicly recognised Him as a prophet, while Annas has openly declared that He is an impostor; and thus two parties are formed in the city, headed by the two priests, and most men have taken sides with one or the other. But the greater number of the common people are in favour of Jesus, believing Him to be the Christ. The Pharisees most oppose Him, because He boldly reproves their sins and hypocrisy; and though they fear Him, they hate and would destroy Him, for He preaches so plainly against their wickedness that the people have ceased to respect them. Even Nicodemus, who at first was inclined to accept Jesus as a prophet, finding the Pharisees opposed to Him, and being unwilling to lose his following among them, kept away from the house where Jesus was by day; but his curiosity to learn more of Him led him to visit the holy Prophet secretly by night. This he did twice, coming alone in the darkness, and being let in by his friend Rabbi Amos. What the result of these visits was I can only tell you from

Mary's report. She overheard their conversation, her window opening upon the corridor where Jesus was seated after supper, alone in the moonlight, for fully an hour, gazing heavenward in meditation. His pale and mournful features in the white moonlight seemed radiant as marble, and as cold, when Rabbi Amos came, and announced the ruler Nicodemus as one desirous of speaking with Him.

"Bid him come in and see me, if he hath aught to say to me," answered the Prophet, turning towards him.

"Nicodemus," added my cousin Mary, "then came to the corridor, wrapped carefully in his mantle; and, looking about as though to see if any marked him, he dropped it from his face, and, bowing reverently, said to the Prophet—

"'Pardon me, O Rabbi, that I come to thee by night; but by day thou hast enough to do with healing and teaching. I am glad to find thee alone, great Prophet, for I would ask thee concerning many things.'

"'Speak, Nicodemus, and I will listen to thy words.'

"'Rabbi,' said the ruler of the Pharisees, 'I know thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these things that thou doest except God be with him. That thou art a mighty prophet I believe, as do all men; but art thou the Messiah? Tell me plainly.'

"'If I tell thee, Nicodemus, thou wilt not believe,' replied Jesus, mildly. 'I will ask of thee one question. Whence cometh Christ?'

"'He is the son of David, and cometh out of Bethlehem.'

"'Thou hast well answered. Rabbi Amos will tell thee that he has examined the records. Ask him whose son he is who speaketh unto thee.'

"'The son of Joseph and Mary, of the lineage of David's house,' answered Rabbi Amos. 'The record of this Prophet's birth I have seen, O Nicodemus; Caiaphas also hath seen it, and many others. Thou canst examine for thyself if thou wilt come to the Temple with me to-morrow.'

"Thy word suffices, O Rabbi Amos, for who ever knew thy lips to utter falsehood?"

"The same record shows that the great Prophet now here among us was born in Bethlehem in the days of the taxation," said Rabbi Amos.

"Then whence is it, O Prophet, that thou comest out of Nazareth of Galilee?" asked Nicodemus, doubting.

"I will tell thee, Nicodemus," answered Jesus. "My mother dwelt in Nazareth, and sojourning at Bethlehem in order to be registered in her own family town, David's town, I was there born. Thus am I of the line of David, of the town of Bethlehem, and also, as it was prophesied of me, a Nazarene. Dost thou ask more? Dost thou believe?"

"Yea, Lord; but how say the prophets that Messias is to be a king and to rule over the whole earth?"

"My kingdom, O ruler of the Pharisees, is not of this world. I am indeed a king, but of no earthly monarchy. My kingdom, unlike those of earth, has no end; and they who would become its inhabitants must be born again, or they cannot see it."

"Born again!" repeated Nicodemus, marvelling. "How can a man be a second time born after he is old? O Rabbi, thou speakest in parables."

"Art thou a wise man of the Pharisees and a master in Israel, and knowest not what I say?" answered the Prophet. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter my kingdom. He who is born of Adam is of the flesh, and of Satan's kingdom, of which Adam was; but he that is born again is born of the Spirit, and is of my kingdom, for I come to build up a kingdom on the ruins of Satan's empire. Marvel not, then, that I say that the sons of Adam must be born again to be the sons of God. If ye would enter into my kingdom and live for ever, ye must be born again, even of water and of the Spirit."

"How can these things be? I pray thee, Master, explain,

that I may know what this mystery meaneth. How can a man be born when he is old ?

“What! dost thou stumble at the very threshold of the doctrine of my kingdom, O Pharisee? If ye cannot believe earthly things, how shall ye understand the heavenly things which ye seek to know? He that would be my disciple must be born again! Your first birth is under Satan's power, which holds the world, as it now is, in bondage; your second birth will be into His kingdom who has come to destroy Satan's and build up His own. This birth is spiritual.

“Hereupon Nicodemus rose, and said, shaking his head as one who believed not—

“I will hear thee again, O Rabbi, of this matter touching this new birth of which thou speakest.

“When Nicodemus had left Him, Rabbi Amos said—

“Is it indeed true, O Master, that Thou art to establish a kingdom?

“Yea, Rabbi Amos: a kingdom wherein dwelleth righteousness,’ answered the Prophet.

“And shall all nations pay us tribute?

“Thou knowest not what thou sayest, O Rabbi. But the darkness shall be removed from thine eyes when thou seest the Son of man lifted up on His throne, as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness.

“Where will be Thy throne, O Messiah? Wilt Thou drive the Romans from the city of David, and reign there?

“Thou shalt yet behold me on my throne, O Amos, raised above the earth, and drawing all men unto me.

“Will Thy throne be fixed in the clouds of heaven, O Master, that Thou shalt be raised above the earth upon it?” asked Rabbi Amos.

“My throne shall be set on Calvary, and the ends of the earth shall look unto me and acknowledge my empire. Thou knowest not these things now; but hereafter thou shalt remember that I told thee of them.”

Jesus then rose, and, saluting His host, withdrew Himself to the chamber which had been assigned Him; and Mary remained wondering at His sayings.

Thus, dear father, it is made certain from His own words that Jesus is the Christ; that He is to establish a kingdom; that He will stand on "a throne high and lifted up," as saith the prophet, and all the earth shall acknowledge Him. But wherefore His throne shall be on Calvary instead of Mount Zion Rabbi Amos wondered greatly, in converse with us to-day; for Calvary is a place of skulls and of public execution, and is covered with Roman crosses, whereon every week some malefactor is crucified for his crimes! And yet His saying that we must be born *again* is more mysterious still. But John remarked that there are many things which He says to him and to His disciples, plainly telling them they cannot yet understand His words, but that they will hereafter remember; and He tells them that, when they see these things fulfilled, they may remember that He told them of them, and believe in Him, and so have confidence that other sayings and prophecies of His, yet further in the future, shall be fulfilled.

In all that He says, in all that He does, Jesus seems both all-knowing and all-powerful. Whatever He wills to do, He doeth. Never man had power such as dwells in Him. This morning, as He was going forth from the house to depart into the country, a man, lame from his youth, seated upon the threshold, caught Him by His robe, saying—

"Master, heal me!"

"Son, thy sins be forgiven thee," answered Jesus, and then passed on; but the Scribes and Pharisees who stood about, when they heard this, cried—

"This man blasphemeth, for God alone can forgive sins!"

Jesus stopped, and turning to them, said—

"Which is easier, to say to this man, who hath not walked for twelve years, and whose legs and arms are withered, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? If I can bid

him rise and walk as aforetime, and he is healed before your eyes, is it not a proof to you that I have power to forgive his sins also? For what could make him rise and walk but the power of God alone, who also forgiveth men's sins? But that ye may know that the Son of God hath power on earth to forgive sins—behold!" Then, in a loud voice, the Prophet said to the lame man, "Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thine house."

Immediately the man rose to his feet, leaping and praising God; and then taking up the mattress upon which they had brought him to the door, he ran swiftly away to show himself to his kinsfolk, while all the people shouted and praised God.

Thus did Jesus publicly show unto men that He could forgive sins, as He could heal—as the power to do both came equally from God. Does not this power prove that He is the Son of God?

I would you had seen Him, dear father, as He left our house to go away into Galilee. Mary and I fell at His feet, and bathed them with our tears. Rabbi Amos, and even Nicodemus, kneeled before Him, with many others, begging Him to bless them; mothers brought their infants, that He might lay His hands on them; and the sick and impotent were placed by their friends in His path, that His shadow in passing might fall upon them and heal them. Hundreds brought handkerchiefs, amulets, and sprigs of cypress torn from the booths, that they might place them where His garments should touch them. The street was lined with all the afflicted of Jerusalem; and as He moved on between the rows of wretched sufferers, whose hollow eyes and shrivelled arms were turned imploringly towards Him, He healed all by words addressed to them as He passed, so that where He found disease before Him, stretched on beds, He left behind Him health, new risen and rejoicing. We all wept at His departure, and followed Him to the Damascus gate. Here there was assembled a large

company of Levites and priests, among whom were mingled some of the most worthless wretches in Jerusalem. Knowledge of this fact reached Rabbi Amos, who at once sent a message to Æmilius, our Roman friend, informing him that he feared there would be an attempt made to murder Jesus as He went out of the gate, and asking his help.

Æmilius placed himself at the head of fifty horse, and reaching the gate, pressed the crowd back and took possession of the entrance. When Jesus passed through the armed guard beneath the arch, the young Roman courteously offered Him an escort to the next village. But Jesus said—

"Young man, I need not thy help. My hour is not yet come. They cannot harm me till my hour cometh. I am not yet given by my Father into their hands. But take my blessing ; and one day thou shalt know to whom thou hast offered the protection of thy troop."

The Levites and their hired murderers now pressed forward, and with wild and threatening cries broke through the cohort to reach Jesus ; but Æmilius, charging, scattered them and put several to the sword. He then rode up to the side of the Prophet, offering Him the best horse in his company. This help Jesus refused, but walked by the Roman soldier, who constrained Him to accept his escort. Jesus talked kindly with him, and taught him wonderful things touching the kingdom of God.

Æmilius, who informed me of these matters, brought Him as far as Ephraim, and then was about to leave Him to return to the city, when four lepers came from the cemetery of the tombs, near the village, and crying out afar off, said—

"Thou blessed Christ, have mercy on us !"

Jesus stopped, although His disciple Peter would have bidden the lepers hold their peace, as it was late, and his Master was weary ; but Jesus, who is never weary of well-doing, called to the lepers to approach. As they came forward the whole company of people, as well as the Roman soldiers,

drew back to a distance in horror at the sight of these smitten men. They advanced with fear and trembling to within twenty paces of Jesus, and stood still, sore afraid.

"Fear not," said He; "I will make you whole."

He then advanced towards them, and laid His hand upon each of them; they all at the touch were instantly made whole, and stood before Him as men completely cleansed.

When Æmilius saw this miracle, he dismounted from his horse, and falling at Jesus' feet, worshipped Him, crying—

"Thou art Mercury or Jupiter, O mighty God! Give me wisdom and power from the skies!"

"Rise, young man," answered Jesus, looking sadly upon him; "thou shalt have wisdom and grace, but not from thy gods. There is but one God, even the Father: worship Him and He shall reward thee."

Æmilius hath told me that his heart thrilled at these words, and at others Jesus had spoken on the way; and he promised me that he will henceforth cast aside his gods, and believe in the God of Israel, and in Jesus His holy Prophet.

Is not this blessed news? Lo! He proclaims—as saith the Prophet—liberty to the Gentiles.

Now, my dear father, I have, at your command, thus far faithfully written all that I have heard and witnessed respecting Jesus. You must see that He is more than a prophet—that He is in truth the very Christ, the Son of the Father. Withhold, oh! withhold not longer your belief. Thousands believe on Him, and love and reverence Him as Messias. Daily His power over the hearts and minds of men is increasing. The common people worship the very dust of His sandals. The priests believe and tremble; but, like Herod, who sought to kill Him when He was an infant in Bethlehem, they would destroy Him lest He should put them to shame. They say the daily sacrifice will cease, the Temple fall to ruins, and the faith of Israel depart, if Jesus be suffered to live and preach, and to show these mighty signs and wonders among

the people. But all this witnesseth of Him. Did not David prophesy concerning Messias that should come, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord and against His anointed. But He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision"? Thus, dear father, all things work together more and more to prove that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ of God.

Your affectionate and loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XX.

MY DEAR FATHER,

It is many months since you have received a letter from me written with my own hand; and I rejoice that I am so far recovered from sickness that I can write to you once again. I cannot speak to you too much in praise of my uncle Amos and cousin Mary for their lovingkindness during my sickness. By their care and tending, under the blessing of God, I am now nearly well. The pure air of the mountains of Galilee being declared necessary for my health, they journeyed with me thither; and at the foot of Mount Tabor, in the lovely village of Nain, I have passed many weeks, gaining strength each day.

We are now sojourning in the humble abode of Sarah, a widow, whose husband had perished in the Great Sea, on which he sailed in one of the merchant ships of Cæsarea. The cottage of the widow stands in a garden, from whence may be seen Mount Tabor in all the majesty of his greatness. One day, while I was walking in the garden, two men, dusty and travel-worn, stopped at the half-open gate, and saluting us, said—

"Peace be to this house, maiden, and all who dwell therein."

"Enter," said the widow, who had heard them, "enter, and ye shall have water for your feet, and bread to strengthen you."

The two men then entered and sat down; and when they had been refreshed by the poor but hospitable widow, one of them rose and said—

"This day is salvation come to this house. We are disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, and go from city to city, proclaiming the day of the Lord at hand, for *Messias* is come!"

On hearing these words, Mary and I both exclaimed with joy that we had seen and heard Jesus at Jerusalem, and believed on Him. Hereupon the men seemed greatly rejoiced, and answered our questions concerning the Prophet, saying that He was in Samaria, preaching and working miracles, and proclaiming His kingdom. When we heard this we rejoiced exceedingly, for we had not heard of Him for a long time. From these disciples we learned that He had chosen twelve apostles, who always went with Him, and were daily taught of Him; and also, more recently, seventy others, whom He sent by two and two into every city to herald His approach.

"Will He, then, come to Nain?" said the widow. "I should be willing to die if I could cast my eyes but once upon so great and holy a man."

"Yes, He will come hither," answered the men; "and when we shall report to Him your hospitality to us, He will visit your house; for He never forgets a cup of water given to one of His disciples."

The men then departed, again calling down the peace of God upon our abode. They had been gone but a short space before we heard a great commotion in the market-place hard by. Upon going to the house-top, we beheld these two men

standing upon a hillock, and preaching the kingdom of Christ at hand, and calling upon all who heard them to repent of their evil deeds and lead a godly life, for that Jesus would one day judge them according to the deeds done in the body. Upon this, some cried out against Jesus, and others threw stones at the two men; and, gazing down from the house-top, we saw one of them take off his sandals and shake the dust from them, saying in a loud voice—

“As ye reject the words of life, your sins shall remain upon you, even as I return to you the dust of your city.”

They then departed, followed by Levites and men of the baser sort, who fairly drove them from the town. This enmity, we found, was caused by an order from the great Sanhedrim to all the synagogues and priests in the land, that they should denounce all who preached Jesus of Nazareth as the Christ.

While we were grieving at this enmity against a Prophet sent from God, one whose life is a record of good deeds, there entered hastily a fair young maid whose name was Ruth. She held an open letter in her hand, and her beautiful face glowed with some secret joy, contrasting strangely with the present sadness of our own. We knew Ruth well, and loved her as if she had been our sister. She was an orphan, and dwelt with her uncle, Elihaz the Levite, a man of power in the town. She was without guile, unsuspecting, and very simple in all her ways.

“What good news bringest thou, dear Ruth?” asked Mary, smiling in reply to her bright smiles. “From whom is this letter?”

“For Sarah,” answered the pretty maid, blushing so timidly that we half suspected the truth.

“But that is not telling us from whom it comes,” persevered Mary, playfully.

“You can guess,” she answered, glancing back at us over her white shoulder, as she bounded away into the house.

We quickly followed after her, and heard her cry, as she put the letter into the dear widow's hand—

"From Samuel."

"Blessed be God!" cried the widow. "My son liveth and is well."

"Read, dear Sarah," cried the maiden. "He was in Alexandria when he wrote this, and will soon be at home. Oh, happy, happy day!" added the rejoicing girl, quite forgetful of our presence. But we had long known the story of her love for the widow's son, whom we had once seen in Jerusalem, as she had confided to us all her hopes and fears, and read to us the letters that came from him on the seas; for he went down to the sea to trade in ships, like his father before him. We knew, moreover, that the youthful wanderer loved her with the same devotion wherewith she loved him, and our hearts sympathised with her in her true affection.

"Nay," said the widow, "my eyes are filled with tears of gladness; I cannot see to read. Do thou read it aloud. Let Adina and Mary also know what he writeth. Is the letter to me or to thee, child?"

"To—to *me*, dear Sarah," answered the maiden, with a momentary embarrassment.

"Of a truth, it is most fitting thou shouldst receive the best part of the epistles. But so that I hear and know that he is well, it is the same, write he to me or thee."

Ruth then cast a bright look upon us, and thus read aloud the letter from over the sea:—

"DEAREST RUTH,—I fear you have been impatient at my long silence; but I love you not less, though you do not often hear from me. Now that I am safe I will write to you, which I would not do while my state remained uncertain. Know, that after our ship left Cæsarea for Crete we were caught by a north wind; and, striving to make the east end of the island, we lost way, and were driven upon Africa, where

we were wrecked, losing all our cargo and the lives of many who sailed with us. With others, I was taken by the barbarians, and carried inland to a country of rocky mountains, and there became a bondman to one of the chief men of the nation wherein I was made captive. At length, well knowing the anguish you and my beloved mother must suffer, should you never more hear tidings of me, I resolved to escape from bondage. After great perils I reached the sea-side, and at the end of many days, following the coast, I was taken on board by a small ship of Cyprus and conveyed to Alexandria. The vessel was owned by a rich merchant of my own people, Manasseh Benjamin Ben Israel, who, finding me sick and destitute of all things, took me home to his hospitable house, and treated me as a son till I regained my health and strength—saying that he had a daughter far away in Judaea, whom I saw at the house of Rabbi Amos, and he hoped that if she ever needed the aid of strangers, God would repay him by making them do even so to her."

Here Mary and I looked at each other with joyful wonder.

"It was my father," I exclaimed, with emotion; "I rejoice that his house became thy son's home, O lady. Blessed be my father!"

When Sarah heard it was your house, dear father, where her son had been so hospitably sheltered, she embraced me again and again, and entreated me to convey to you her heartfelt gratitude—which I herewith record. And it is, dearest father, because you know and love this young man, who hath been so providentially thrown upon your care, that I shall especially recount what I know concerning him.

Ruth then ended the reading of the letter, which told that he should return in the first ship bound to Sidon or Cæsarea, and that he hoped to behold her and his mother face to face, and to receive as his bride the maiden he had so long loved and cherished in his heart.

Sarah now seems to be drawn closer to me in affection, and Ruth also, since they have learned that I am the daughter of the noble Jew who succoured Samuel in a strange land. At length, as the day drew near for me to leave them, to return to Jerusalem, my health being quite restored, we were all filled with delight and wonder at the appearance of the long absent son and lover in the midst of our happy circle.

Mary and I had once seen him, and we were now impressed with his manly and sun-browned beauty, his bold air, and frank, honest bearing. We could not but agree that the pretty Ruth had chosen well. He gave me the package which you desired him to send to Jerusalem, and thus we all had reason to rejoice at his coming. But, alas! my dear father, our joy was short-lived. Little did we think how speedily our rejoicings were to be turned into mourning. The very night of his return he was seized with a malignant fever, which he had brought from Africa with him; and we were all overwhelmed with grief.

Great was the anguish of the mother, and heartrending the distress of his betrothed, as they bent over his couch, and saw the fierce plague burning him, as if he were in a furnace.

Unable to recognise them, he raved wildly, and sometimes fancied himself suffering thirst on the burning sands of Africa; at others, battling with the barbarians for his life. All that physicians and his anxious friends could do—for he was greatly beloved as well for his own sake as for his mother's and Ruth's—availed nothing. This morning, the third day after his return, he expired in much pain of body. Poor Ruth! She cast herself in great anguish upon his lifeless and disfigured corpse; and now that they have removed her from the chamber of death her shrieks fill the house. His mother sits by him, the image of despair, holding his cold hand in hers, and uttering wails of woe sad enough to rend a Roman's heart.

"My son ! my son ! lost and found, to be torn from me for ever ! Oh that I had died for thee ! Thou and Ruth would then be happy. Would to God I had died for thee, O my son, Samuel, my dear son !" It is like David bewailing Absalom.

I write this ill news to you, dear father, knowing how deeply you will mourn the young man's death ; for your letters show me that you have for him almost a father's love, and have even promised to provide him with a ship to trade in Egypt, after his marriage with Ruth shall have taken place. Alas ! instead of a bridal, behold a funeral. Already the bearers are at the door, and quickly he will be borne forth upon the bier to the burial-place without the city.

"Oh," sighs Mary near me, as I write, "oh, that Jesus, the mighty Prophet, had been here ; He could have healed him !"

John has sent her a message, saying that He is travelling this way, on His mission of healing and teaching, and may be here this evening. But what will it avail, dear father ? Oh, if He could have been here yesterday, His power over disease would have enabled Him to save this young man's precious life. But regrets are useless. The noble Samuel is dead, and will live again only in the resurrection of the just.

I hear the heavy tread of the dead-bearers in the court below. The shrieks and wails of the mourning women fill my soul with sorrow. But above all pierces the wild cry of anguish of the bereaved mother. Ruth's voice is hushed. She has been for the last hour motionless as marble, sitting with fixed eyes and rigid features. Only by her pulse can it be said she lives. Poor maiden ! The blow is too terrible for her to bear.

My cousin Mary has this moment received a small roll of parchment, which, from the flush on her cheek, I know to be from her betrothed. She smiles sadly, and with tears in her eyes gives it to me.

I have read it, dear father. If I have time I will transcribe it here before the call to follow the dead forth to burial is given.

"Gadara, beyond Judæa."

"The bearer, beloved, is one of the disciples of Jesus. His name is Bartimæus. He was blind and poor, and subsisted by begging ; and, as you see, his sight is restored, and now he goeth about from town to town, where he has been known as a blind man, to proclaim what Jesus has done for him. He takes this to thee. I write to say that I wish thou mayest prosper in all things, and find the health for which thou and thy cousin sought the air of Mount Tabor. I have no greater joy than to hear of your welfare. This letter beseecheth thee, maiden, that as we love one another unfeignedly, so may we soon be united in that holy union which God hath blessed and commanded. I would have thee bear in remembrance that thou gavest thy promise hereunto when last we met at Nazareth. But, having much to say hereupon, I will not now write it ; but by to-morrow, or the day after, I trust to come to you, and speak with you, dearly beloved, face to face, upon those things which are now in my heart. Farewell, lady, and peace be with you and with all in your house. Greet thy friends in my name, letting them know we shall shortly be with you ; also Amos, your father, now our dear brother in the Lord. There are many things which I have seen and heard touching my master Jesus, and His holy mission to the world, which I will declare unto you when we meet, that you also may have fellowship with us in those things which we know and believe concerning Him. My Master saluteth you and all in your house ; Rabbi Amos also greeteth thee with a kiss. This is the second epistle I have written unto you from this place."

"Oh, that the mighty Prophet had come one day sooner !" cried Mary. "What woe and anguish would have been

spared to poor Ruth and to his mother! But the will of Jehovah be done."

We hear now, dear father, the voice of the governor of the funeral, bidding us come down to bury the dead.

Farewell, my father. I know you will mourn for the memory of the noble youth whose death has this day filled all Nain with sorrow. As I look from the lattice, I see a concourse of people, filling all the street. Now, may the God of our father Abraham preserve and keep you, and suffer us once more to meet face to face in joy and peace.

Your sorrowful daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXI.

MY DEAREST FATHER,

An hour since I laid down my pen, in order to follow to his burial the son of our hostess. I now have to recount to you one of the most marvellous things which ever happened, and which fills us all with such joy and wonder that I fear my trembling fingers will scarcely record what I have to tell you.

As I told you in my letter just finished, I was called away to accompany the weeping mother to the burial-place outside the gates. But when I reached the courtyard where the body of her son lay upon a bier, which the bearers had already raised upon their shoulders, poor Ruth was stricken down by her deep grief, and I led her to her room, where she sank on her couch as one dead. I could not leave her thus, and the train went forth from the house without me; Mary, as she walked, supporting upon her arm the bereaved mother, clad in her mourning weeds.

As the funeral train passed the lattice, it seemed endless,

so vast a number of people walked forth behind the bier to do honour to a widow in Israel. At length it passed by, and I was left alone with the motionless Ruth. She seemed to sleep, though every few moments she would murmur the dead man's name. I sat by her, meditating upon the mysterious ways of God in bringing this widow's son safely home from the thousand dangers to which he had been exposed, from shipwreck and bondage, to gladden her soul with his presence for a few hours, and then to die in her arms! As I gazed on the marble countenance of the bereaved maiden, I could not but pray that she might never recover from her swoon, to revive to the bitter knowledge of her loss, and the renewal of her grief.

Suddenly I heard a very great shout. I sprang up, and hastened to the lattice. It was repeated louder, and with a glad tone, that showed me that it was a shout of joy. It seemed to come from beyond the city walls, and from a hundred voices raised at once. I knew that the house-top overlooked the walls; and seeing Ruth moved not, I ascended rapidly to the parapet, the shouts and glad cries still increasing as I went up, and awakening my wonder and amazement. Upon reaching the flat roof, and stepping upon the parapet, I saw Elec, our Gibeonite slave, coming along the street, towards the house, with the speed of the antelope.

He was waving his hands wildly, and crying out something which I could not distinctly hear. Behind him I saw two youths running also, hastening, as if they brought some great tidings.

I knew something wonderful must have happened, but could not divine what it was. On looking towards the gate, from which direction the shouts at intervals continued to resound, I discovered on the hill-side of the cemetery many people crowded together, and evidently surrounding some person in their midst, for the whole order of the train was broken up. The bier I could not discern, nor could I understand how the solemnity of the march of the funeral train had been suddenly

changed to the thronging of a confused multitude, rending the sky with loud acclamations. The whole body of people was pressing back towards the city. The persons whom I had first seen running along the street now spoke their message as they drew nigher.

"He is alive ! he is alive !" shouted Elec.

"He has been raised from the dead !" cried the young man next behind him.

"He lives, and is walking back to the city !" said the third, calling to those who, like me, had run to their house-tops to know the meaning of the uproar we heard.

"Who—who is alive ?" I eagerly demanded of Elec, as he passed beneath the parapet. "What means this shouting, O Elec ?"

He looked up to me with a face full of the greatest delight, mixed with awe, and said—

"Young Rabbi Samuel is restored to life ! He is no longer dead. You will soon see him, for they are bringing him back to the city, and every one is mad with joy. Where is Ruth the maiden ? I am come to tell her the glorious news."

With an eagerness that I cannot describe, hardly believing what I heard, I hastened to Ruth, in order to prevent the effects of too sudden joy. Upon entering the chamber, I found that the voice of Elec, who had shouted into her ears the news of which he was the bearer, had aroused her from her stupor of grief. She was looking at him wildly, as one who understood not. I ran to her, and, folding her in my arms, said—

"Dear Ruth, there is news—good news ! It must be true ! Hear the shouts of gladness in all the town !"

"Lives !" she repeated, shaking her head ; "No—no—no ! Yes, *yonder* !" she said, raising her beautiful, glittering eyes to heaven, and pointing upward.

"But on earth also," cried Elec, vehemently. "I saw him sit up, and heard him speak as well as ever he spoke !"

"How came it to pass ? Let me know all," I cried.

"How? Who could have done such a miracle but the mighty Prophet we saw at Jerusalem?" he answered.

"Jesus?" I exclaimed, joyfully.

"Who else could it be? Yes. He met the bier just beyond the gate. But here they come!"

Elec was interrupted in his narrative by the increased noise of voices in the streets, and the tramp of hundreds of feet. The next moment the room was filled with a great crowd of shouting people, some weeping, some laughing, as if beside themselves. In their midst I beheld Samuel walking, alive and well, his mother clinging to him like a vine about an oak.

"Where is Ruth?" he cried. "Oh! where is she? Let me make her happy with my presence."

I gazed upon him with awe, as if I had seen a spirit.

Ruth no sooner heard his voice than she uttered a shriek of joy. "He lives—he lives indeed!" she screamed; and springing forward, she was saved from falling to the ground by being clasped to his manly breast.

"Let us kneel and thank God!" he said.

For a few moments the sight was solemn and awe-inspiring beyond any spectacle ever seen on earth. The newly-risen from the dead knelt in the midst of the floor, with his mother at his right hand, leaning her head upon his shoulder, and Ruth clasped in his left arm, and fast embracing him, as if he were an angel, who if she held him not would spread his wings and ascend, leaving her for ever. Mary and I knelt by her side, while all the people bowed their heads in worship, as he lifted up his voice in grateful acknowledgments to the Giver of life and health for the mercy vouchsafed to him. When he had performed this first sacred duty, he rose to his feet and received all our embraces. Hundreds came in to see his face, and every tongue was loosed in praise of the power of Jesus.

"But where is the holy Prophet?" I asked of Mary. "Shall He be forgotten amid all our joy?"

"We thanked Him with all our hearts, and bathed His hands with tears of gratitude," she answered; "but when they would have brought Him into the city in triumph, He conveyed Himself away from the throng, and none could see aught of Him. But John, who was with Him, told me He would come into the city after a while, and should be brought to our abode."

"Oh! I shall then behold Him, and thank Him also," I cried. "Speak to me, Mary, concerning this wonderful miracle," I continued; for though I saw Samuel now seated, and even eating food served by his glad mother and the happy Ruth, while all looked on to see if in truth he ate; and though I believed in the power of Jesus to do all things, yet I could hardly feel assured that he whom I had beheld carried out a dead man on his bier I now saw seated at table, alive and well.

"I will tell thee all," answered Mary, whose face shone with a holy light, radiating from her great happiness; and she led me apart, and spoke thus:—

"We went weeping forth, slowly following the bier; and we had passed the gate, when we saw, coming along the path through the valley leading to Tabor, a party of twelve or thirteen men on foot. They were followed by a crowd of men, women, and children from the country, and journeying thus they met us at the crossing of the stone bridge. Hearing one of them that followed say aloud, 'It is the Prophet of Nazareth, with His disciples,' I looked earnestly forward, and joyfully recognised Jesus, with John walking by His side.

"'Oh, that Jesus had been in Nain when thy son fell sick!' I said to the widow, pointing Him out to her, as He and His company stopped at the entrance to the bridge, and drew to one side, the way being too narrow for both parties to cross at the same time. Upon looking up and seeing Him, marking His benign countenance, and beholding how sorrowfully He gazed upon the widow, I recollected how He

might have prevented her son's death had He been in Nain. As for the poor widow, she could no longer command her grief, which broke forth afresh; and covering her face with her veil, she wept so sore that all eyes were piteously fastened upon her. I observed that the holy Prophet's gaze rested upon her with compassion; and as the widow came opposite where He stood, He advanced a step towards us, and said in a voice that thrilled with sympathy—

“Weep not, O widow. Thy son shall live again!”

“I know it, O Rabboni—at the last day,” she answered. ‘He was so noble—so young—he was all I had, and had been so many months absent in far lands, only to come home to die. I know that thou art a Prophet come from God, and that all good works follow thee. Oh, if thou hadst been here, my son need not have died. Thy word would have healed him. But now he is dead! dead! dead!’

“The bereaved mother then poured forth her tears afresh.

“Woman, weep not. I will restore thy son!” said the Prophet.

“What saith he?” cried some Pharisees who were in the funeral train; ‘that he will raise a dead man? He speaketh blasphemy. God only can raise the dead.’

“And they smiled and scoffed. But Jesus laid His hand upon the pall that covered the body, and said to those who bore the corpse—

“Rest the bier upon the ground.”

“They instantly obeyed Him, and stood still. He then advanced amid a deep silence, and uncovering the marble visage, touched the hand of the dead man, and said in a loud and commanding voice—

“Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!”

“There was a moment's painful suspense throughout the vast multitude. Every eye was fixed upon the bier. The voice was heard by the spirit of the dead, and it came back to his body. There was visible a living, trembling, stirring

of the hitherto motionless corpse ; colour flushed the livid cheek ; the eyelids opened, and he that had been dead fixed his eyes on Jesus ; then he raised his hand, and his lips moved ! The next moment he sat up on the bier, and spake aloud in his natural voice, saying—

“Lo ! here I am.”

“Jesus then took him by the hand, and assisting him to quit the bier and stand upon his feet, led him to his mother, and delivered him to her, saying—

“Woman, behold thy son !”

“Upon seeing this miracle, the people shouted with joy and wonder, and there came a great fear on us all ; and, lifting up their voices, they who had so lately mourned and bewailed the dead, glorified God, saying, ‘The Lord has indeed visited His people Israel. A great prophet is risen up among us. The Messiah is come, and Jesus is the very Christ, who hath the keys of death and hell.’

“With such words and exclamations, and great shouts of rejoicing, the multitude surrounded the young man restored to life, and conducted him back to the city ; the great mass of the people being drawn together more by the miracle than by the august Person by whose act it had been wrought. I sought out Jesus to cast myself at His feet, but He shrank from the worship and thankfulness which His mercy to us had awakened. Thus, humility is an element of all power.”

This, my dear father, is the narrative of the raising to life of Samuel, the son of Sarah, the widow of Nain. I give it to you in its simple truth. It will not fail to command your belief. The miracle was performed in open day, in the presence of thousands. The enemies of Jesus, the scoffing Scribes and Pharisees, do not deny the miracle, for they were convinced of the reality of the death of the young man ; for he died, as I have before said, of the plague, and his corpse was a loathsome sight to those who beheld it ; yet, wonderful to tell, when he was restored to life by the power of Jesus,

he sat up free from all external signs of disease, his skin fair and smooth, and his whole aspect that of ruddy health and manly beauty. No man could doubt, therefore, that a miracle had been performed, and one of the most wondrous kind; for never was it heard before that the dead were restored to life by the power of a man. This miracle of the raising from the dead of Samuel, the widow's son, has caused hundreds this day to confess His name, and to believe in Him as the anointed Shiloh of Israel.

Since I wrote this history, I have conversed with Samuel upon the consciousness which he had of being dead. He replies that it seemed to him that he had been in a dream, the chain of which was now broken, and could not be united. "Fragments," said he, "of a state of delight, of splendour, of glory and bliss; of music ineffable, and sights such as the tongue of man cannot describe, passed before me for a few moments after I stood upon my feet; but they presently melted away, and I can now only remember that such things had been. When I found myself upon the bier, I felt no surprise; for the fact that I was being taken to my burial seemed to present itself to my reanimated consciousness." Many of the doctors have been to see him through the day, and have put difficult questions to him touching the state of the soul when separated from the body; but he could tell them nothing, for all had seemed to him like shining fragments of a gorgeous vision.

Jesus came into the town at eventide, and abode with us. I would you had witnessed the thankfulness of the happy mother, and of the no less happy Ruth. They watched for His every wish, and seemed to desire that He had a thousand wants, that they might minister to them. But His life is simple—His wants are few. He thinks little of the things of this life; and while He speaketh of the kingdom of God to those about Him, He forgets to partake of the food placed before Him. *We* also forget all things else when He speaks,

and stand or sit around Him, drinking in the rich wisdom that falleth from His lips. The more I see of Him, dear father, the more I stand in awe of Him and love Him.

Mary is to-morrow to become the bride of John, and Jesus will be present at the wedding ; for while He severely rebukes sin and folly, He sanctifies by His presence the holy rite of marriage, which God hath ordained. Next month the happy Ruth will wed the young man whom she has so wonderfully received back from the dead.

On the eve of the eighth day from this time I shall depart hence, with John and Mary, for Jerusalem, whence I will write to you again.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXII.

Once more, my dear father, I write a letter to you from the holy city. This morning, when I awoke at the sound of the silver trumpets of the priests, ringing melodiously from the summit of Mount Moriah, I felt anew that stirring of devotion which the children of Abraham must always feel in the city of God, and in the presence of His very Temple. As I ascended to the roof of the house to pray, the glorious pile of the Temple towered heavenward from the summit of Moriah, in all the magnificence of its splendid beauty. The blue wreaths of incense were already curling upward into the quiet skies, while the murky cloud sent up by the burnt sacrifice rolled darkly above the pinnacles, casting an awful shade over the temple. As the cloud sailed onward, and stood above the Valley of Kedron, the sun rose and gilded its massive edges as if they had been fringed with gold.

Louder and clearer rang the trumpets, and every house-top soon had its group of worshippers; while along the streets rolled the tide of people, some leading lambs, others driving goats before them, others carrying doves in their bosoms, to be offered to the Lord by the priest.

"It was a joyous morning to me, dear father; for Æmilius, the noble Roman prefect, was this day voluntarily to present himself at the Temple as a proselyte to the holy faith of Israel. I will not now record the arguments whereby he was led to renounce idolatry and brought to worship Jehovah. Pilate, the Procurator, encouraged instead of opposing this change in him, believing that it would please the Jews, and turn their hearts to the Romans: he resolved, therefore, to grace the rite with his presence. I could see him proudly driving onward toward the Temple in his gilded chariot, surrounded by a score of guards, blazing in their Grecian cuirasses. I sought in vain to behold Æmilius; but he came to the Temple by another street. The morning was a lovely one to me. I thought I had never seen the olive groves, on the hill-side beyond the king's gardens, so green, nor the harvest so yellow, as the corn waved in the soft breeze of the opening morning. The lofty palms everywhere appeared to bend their verdant fans with joyous motion; the birds in the palace gardens sang sweeter and louder; and Jerusalem itself seemed more beautiful than ever.

While I was gazing upon the scene, and worshipping God, and thanking Him for the conversion of Æmilius, Rabbi Amos came, and said that he would take us to the Temple; for he was at leisure on that morning. We were soon on our way, climbing the paved pathway to Moriah. Oh, how grandly towered the holy Temple above our heads, seeming to rise even into the blue of the far heaven! When the great gates were thrown open, north and south, east and west, were thronged with the multitude pressing through; while from the galleries above each gate pealed forth continuously the clear-voiced

trumpets of God. My uncle showed me the massive doors, all overlaid with sheets of beaten gold, and the floor of green marble on which we trod. He bade me mark the costly entablature of coloured stones, cunningly worked with the Grecian chisel ; and especially the roof of fretted silver, set with precious stones, the onyx, beryl, sapphire, carbuncle, and jasper. I was dazzled by the magnificence and awed by the vast extent of the splendid building wherein I stood ; while ten thousand people were to be seen moving towards the altar of sacrifice. From that mighty court I was led into a hall nearly a hundred cubits in length, its ceiling of pure gold, upheld by a thousand and one columns of porphyry and white marble, ranged in order. Such richness I had never conceived, or thought possible on earth. But when Rabbi Amos explained that they all were made after patterns of heavenly things, I ceased to marvel, and only wished I might one day dwell in those celestial houses where, the holy Jesus teaches us, are mansions not made with hands,—houses that endure for ever, reserved for the good and just.

I was not permitted to approach the sacred chamber, where stood the four thousand vessels of gold of Ophir, used in the sacrifices on great days ; and this being a high day, I saw six hundred priests standing about the altar, each with a golden censer in his hand. Beyond this is the holy ark of the covenant, over which hover the cherubim, their wings meeting and overshadowing the mercy-seat ! As this was the Holy of Holies, it was not vouchsafed me to see it ; but its place was pointed out to me within the veil which conceals from all eyes, but those of the High Priest once a year, the seat of God's throne on the earth, alas ! now left empty, since the glory of the Shekinah departed from the Holy of Holies !

The air of the vast Temple was sweet with the fragrance of burning frankincense. As the victims bled and the smoke ascended, the people fell on their faces and worshipped God. It was a glorious sight, and made my heart stand still with

fear. I seemed to expect to hear the voice of Jehovah breaking the stillness that followed. But after a few moments' silence, loud trumpet-tones sounded in the ears of every soul in the countless multitude. This was followed by a peal of music that shook the air, from a choir of two thousand singers, male and female, of the sons and daughters of Levi, who served in the Temple. Coming forth from the southern court, they advanced in a long train, singing psalms of praise, and playing on sackbut and harp, psaltery, dulcimer, and timbrel. As they ascended to the choir, their voices, mingling with the instruments, filled all the Temple. I never heard before such heavenly harmony; especially when, as they came to the lofty choir, a thousand Levites, with manly voices, joined them, and the whole company chanted one of the grandest of the Psalms of David. I was overcome: my senses dissolved in a sea of seraphic sounds; my heart swelled as if it would break; and I wept for joy and gladness.

When the chant was concluded, the whole multitude answered, "Amen and amen," like the deep voice of a mighty wind suddenly shaking the foundations of the Temple.

At length I beheld a train of priests following the High Priest as he marched thrice round the altar. In that train I beheld a company of proselytes, led by twelve aged Levites with long snowy beards, and clad in vestments of the purest white. Among the proselytes, who numbered full a score of men from almost every nation, I discerned the tall and noble figure of the Roman, *Æmilius*. He was robed in a black garment that covered him from head to foot. But when he drew near the baptismal basin, two young priests removed this outer garment and robed him in white. I then saw him baptised into the family of Abraham, and a new name given him, that of Eleazer. I heard the silver trumpets proclaim the conversion, and the multitude shouting their joy.

What was done further I have not in remembrance, as after the baptism of Æmilius I was too happy to see or to think of any one else. There is now, dear father, nought that could prevent our union. Æmilius henceforth will worship the God of our fathers. I know you said, in your last letter to me, that you feared the noble young Roman was led by his love for me to renounce his religion, and not from honest persuasion of its falsehood and of the truth of ours. But I am assured, dear father, that he doth truly believe. The converse he has had with me, and with Rabbi Amos, and others of the learned doctors of our nation, whom he has met at our house, together with the careful reading of the Scriptures of the prophets, have not only convinced him that the Lord God of Israel is the only God of the whole earth, but that the worshippers of idols are the servants of Satan, who hath set up his kingdom in enmity to that of the true God.

While I was lifting up my heart in thankfulness for the happy conversion of Æmilius, and while the Jews were crowding around him to extend to him the hand of fellowship, rejoicing that a man of such authority should believe with us, my uncle Amos drew my attention by exclaiming joyfully—

“Behold! yonder is Jesus, the Prophet.”

“Where?” I cried, trying to discover the divine Prophet among the multitude.

“He stands by yonder pillar of porphyry. John is on one side of Him, and Peter on the other. He is pointing to the altar, and teaching them or explaining something to them. Let us try to approach Him.”

We immediately, though with difficulty, made our way towards the spot where we had discovered Him. The report that the Christ was in the Temple rapidly went abroad, and the whole multitude pressed towards the same point. At length we came sufficiently near to stand within a few cubits

of Him. Here a tall, richly-attired Greek addressed Rabbi Amos, saying—

“Sir, tell me who is that youthful Jew, whose countenance is filled with firmness and loving-kindness ; in whose face are dignity and wisdom ; whose noble eyes seem filled with a holy sadness, and whose glance is full of innocence and sweetness ? He seems born to love men and to command them. All seek to approach him. Tell me, sir, who is he ?”

“That, O stranger, is Jesus of Nazareth, the Jewish Prophet,” answered my uncle Amos, glad to point Him out to the Greek.

“Then am I well rewarded for my delay in turning aside to Jerusalem,” answered the Grecian. “I have heard of His fame even in Macedonia, and rejoice to behold Him. Think you He will do some great miracle ?”

“He performs not miracles to gratify the wishes of men, but to bear testimony to the truths He teaches, that they are delivered to Him of God. Hark ! He speaks,” cried my uncle.

Every voice was hushed as the words of Jesus rose clear and sweet, piercing the stillness like a heavenly clarion. And He preached, dear father, a sermon so full of wisdom, of love to man, of love to God, of knowledge of our hearts, of divine and convincing power, that thousands wept ; thousands were chained to the spot with awe and with rejoicing, and all were moved as if an angel had addressed them. They cried, “Never man spake like this man.” And certainly never from human lips came such wisdom.

When He had ended, the priests, seeing that He had carried the hearts of all the people, were greatly offended, and not being able to show their hatred and fear in any other way, they hired a wicked man named Gazeel, a robber, who, taking one of the blood-stained sacrificing knives from the altar, crept towards Him behind the column, to slay Him. The robber drew near, and had already raised his hand to

strike the Prophet from behind, when Jesus, turning His head, arrested the hand of the murderer in mid-air by a look. Unable to move, Gazeel stood betrayed to all eyes in the very act of murder, like a statue of stone.

"Return to those who hired thee. My hour is not yet come; nor can they have any power over me until my Father's will be fulfilled concerning me."

The robber bowed his head with deep humility; the knife dropped from his hand and rang upon the marble floor, and he sank at Jesus' feet, imploring forgiveness. The people would have torn Gazeel in pieces, but Jesus said—

"Let him depart in peace. The day shall come when he will be willing to lay down his life to save mine. Ye priests that go about to kill me," He added, fixing His clear gaze upon the men who had sent Gazeel, "wherefore do you seek my life? Because I bear testimony to your wickedness. Ye lay heavy burdens on the people, and will not lift them with one of your fingers. I have come to my own, and to my Temple, and ye receive me not. The day cometh when this Temple shall be thrown down, and not one stone left upon another; and some who hear me shall behold it, and shall mourn in that day. O Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how oft would I have gathered thy children together as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Thou shalt be left desolate and cast out among cities, because thou knowest not the day of thy visitation. But ye who would escape these troubles, seek to enter my kingdom, which shall have no end; fly to the Jerusalem which is above, whose foundation is eternal, and whose Temple is the Lord God Almighty, who is also the Light and Glory thereof."

Upon hearing these words, there arose a great cry from ten thousand voices—

"Hail to Jesus, the King of Israel and Judah! Hosanna to the Prince of David! We will have no king but Jesus."

At this shout, which was caught and repeated beyond the four gates of the Temple, the priests cried aloud that the people were rising in revolt.

Pilate, who with his guard was just leaving the Court of the Gentiles, hearing this, turned to ask what it meant. One of the priests, desirous to have Jesus slain, quickly answered that the people had proclaimed Jesus the Nazarene king, and that He was already placing Himself at the head of the people.

Hearing this, Pilate sent off messengers to the Castle of David for soldiers, and with his body-guard turned back to the Temple gate, rushing upon the people sword in hand.

The tumult was now dreadful, and the bloodshed would have been great, but that Jesus suddenly appeared before Pilate—none saw how He had come thither—and said—

“O Roman! I seek no kingdom but such as my Father hath given me. Neither thy power nor thy master’s is now in peril. My kingdom is not of this world.”

Pilate was seen to bend his proud head humbly before the Prophet, and said graciously—

“I have no wish to imprison thee. Thy word, O prophet, is sufficient for me. Of thee I have hitherto heard much. Wilt thou come with me to my palace, and let me hear thee, and see some miracle?”

“Thou shalt see me in thy palace, but not to-day; and thou shalt behold a miracle, but not now.”

When Jesus had thus said, He withdrew Himself from Pilate’s presence; and those who would have sought Him to make Him a king could not find Him.

The result of this attempt of the people to make the Prophet their king, and under His direction to overthrow the Roman power, is that the Roman rulers, moved thereunto by Annas and the priests, look upon Jesus with eyes of envy; and Pilate this morning told a concourse of priests, who sought him to pray that he would arrest and imprison the Prophet, that on the first proof they could bring him of His

enmity to Cæsar, he would send his soldiers to take Him. To-day Jesus was resting in our house, when several Scribes and Pharisees came in. I saw by their dark looks that they meditated evil, and secretly sent Elec with a message to Æmilius (now called Eleazer), asking him to be at hand to protect Jesus; for Æmilius is devoted to Him, as we are, and Jesus takes delight in teaching him the things of the kingdom of God.

Jesus, knowing the hearts of these wicked men, said to them, after they had seated themselves and remained some minutes in silence—

“Wherefore are ye come?”

“Master,” said Jehoram, one of the chief Scribes, “we know that thou art a teacher come from God, and fearest no man, nor regardest the person of any man?”

“Yea,” said Zadoc, an aged Levite of great fame among the people, “we have heard how boldly thou speakest at all times, and that thou withdrawest thyself from no man’s power—that not even Pilate, nor Herod, nor Cæsar himself could make thee refrain from speaking what thou choosest to utter. Is it lawful for us Jews, the peculiar nation of God, to pay tribute to Cæsar, who is an idolater? Is it lawful for us to obey the laws of Pilate, rather than the laws of Moses? We ask this as Jews talking with a Jew. Tell us boldly, for thou fearest not the face of any man.”

“Let the question be wholly concerning the tribute to the Romans,” answered Jehoram. “Master, is it lawful for us, the holy nation, to give tribute to Cæsar?”

Jesus looked fixedly upon them, as though He read their wicked thoughts, and said—

“Show me the tribute-money.”

Zadoc gave Him a penny, the Roman coin sent into Judæa by Cæsar, the Emperor, and which we return to Rome in tribute. When Jesus had taken the money, He looked at the head of Augustus stamped upon one side, and then

turning to them, as they waited breathlessly for His answer, said—

“Whose image and whose superscription is this?”

“Cæsar’s,” eagerly answered the whole party.

“Then render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s,” was His calm and wise answer.

I breathed again; for I feared He would answer openly that tribute ought not to be paid, as indeed they hoped He would answer, that they might immediately accuse Him to Pilate as teaching that we ought not to pay tribute to Rome, and so stirring up rebellion.

But the divine wisdom of His answer satisfied all our minds; while the Scribes and Levites, His enemies, heard Him with amazement, looked upon one another as men ashamed, and departed.

So great is His wisdom, dear father, that His enemies cannot triumph over Him. Oh, that you could see Him and hear Him! It is worth a journey from Egypt to Jerusalem to listen to Him, and behold His miracles, whereof He every day performs one or more; till disease, deformity, leprosy, and sickness, seem almost to have disappeared from Jerusalem and Judea.

When Æmilius came, and found Jesus alone with our family, unharmed, he freely spoke his joy.

“Æmilius,” said Jesus to him, “thou art now become a Jew. One step more, and thou shalt enter the kingdom of heaven.”

“What step, dear Master?” the Roman asked, earnestly.

“Thou must be baptised with the Holy Ghost, and thou shalt be partaker of eternal life.”

“Rabboni,” said Æmilius, “I verily thought that to be made a proselyte of Thy people was to be Moses’ disciple, and to have the seal of life eternal. Have I yet more to do?”

"Thou must be my disciple, O Æmilius. I am the end of the law of Moses. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. I give eternal life to as many as believe in me. But thou knowest not now what I say; thou shalt know hereafter."

Æmilius would have questioned Him further; but Jesus left him, and went forth into the garden, where He remained till late at night in meditation and prayer.

I rejoice greatly, dear father, that you permit me to accompany my uncle Amos to Caesarea. We depart after the day of the new moon. Believing, my dearest father, that all I have written you touching Jesus has not been in vain, and that, with me and thousands in Israel, you are ready to believe that He is the Christ, the Deliverer of Jacob,

I am your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXIII.

MY DEAR FATHER,

With joy I have received your letter, in which you say you shall leave Egypt with the next Passover caravan, in order to visit Jerusalem. Already you must be on the way, and I trust you are by this time near Gaza, where my uncle Amos says the caravan will halt to-morrow night. My heart bounds to embrace you, and my eyes fill with bright tears at the thought that I shall once more gaze upon your noble countenance and hear the loved tones of your voice. My happiness is increased by the knowledge that you will be here while Jesus is in the city; for it is said—and John, Mary's husband, confirms it—that He will certainly be at the Passover. I wish, dear father, oh! I wish you might see Him,

because I feel that you would be unable to resist the conviction that He is the very Messiah of God, of whom Moses and the prophets wrote. But if His words, the divine truth and wisdom which flow from His sacred lips, do not win you, the miracles He will do in proof of His mission will convince you. These miracles are daily becoming more mighty and amazing. For Himself, for His own glory and safety (for often has His life been put in peril by His foes), He never resorts to this divine power; but to give attestation to His words of truth that He came from God, to heal the sick, to relieve the distressed, He daily performs them. Man never spake like Him; man never worked wonders such as He works. He has converted water into wine; He has healed with a word the dying son of the nobleman, Chuza, the first officer of Herod's household, though many leagues from him at the time; He stilled a fearful tempest on the Sea of Tiberias, by speaking to the wind and the waves, and commanding peace! In the country of the Gadarenes He cast out unclean spirits from many possessed with them, and the devils, coming out of the bodies of those they had tormented, acknowledged His power, and confessed Him, as if against their will, to be the Christ, the Son of David. Of the raising of the daughter of the ruler Jairus, and of the son of the widow at Nain, I have already written to you. Besides working these miracles of healing and raising from the dead, He has been seen walking upon the sea a league from the shore, as firmly as if He trod upon a floor of porphyry; which many of the fishermen seeing, they were filled with terror, and made all haste to flee to the land, where they spread the news abroad. He has restored sight to the blind, and created new limbs where legs and arms had been lost for years. Last week, Eli, the paralytic, whom you knew, a scribe of the Levites, whose hand has been withered nine years, so that he had craved alms of the worshippers in the Temple, hearing of the power of Jesus, sought Him at the

house of my uncle Amos, where He was abiding. It was our blessed privilege to have Him for our guest, for John, His beloved disciple, now the husband of the fair daughter of uncle Amos, my gentle cousin Mary, always led the Prophet to our house.

Jesus was reclining with our family at the evening meal, at the close of the day on which the uproar had taken place in the Temple, as I told you in my letter, when Eli came and stood within the door. Humble and doubting, his knees trembling with fear, he timidly and anxiously looked towards Jesus, but did not speak. I knew wherefore the afflicted man came, and approached him, saying—

“Fear not, Eli; beseech Him, and He will make thee whole.”

“Ah, lady,” he answered, “I fear it is too much joy for me to expect. It is more than I dare hope. But I have come to Him hoping.” His voice trembled, and tears dropped from his eyes as he thought of his family in poverty, and of his own helplessness. “How shall I speak to the great Prophet, my daughter—I, a beggar at the gate of the Temple? Speak for me, and the Lord shall bless thee, my child. My tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth!”

Jesus looked not towards the poor man, His face being turned towards Rabbi Amos, to whom He was explaining the meaning of the sacrifice of Abel. But leaving this discourse, He said, in a gentle voice, without turning His head—

“Come to me, Eli, and ask what is in thy heart, and fear not; for if thou believest, thou shalt receive all thy desire.”

At this Eli came forward, and casting himself at Jesus’ feet, kissed them, and said—

“Rabboni, I am a poor sinful man. I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the Blessed!”

“Dost thou believe, Eli, that I have power to make thee whole?” Jesus asked, looking steadfastly upon him.

“Lord, I believe,” answered Eli, bowing his face to the ground.

"Thy sins, then, be forgiven thee. Rise, and go to thy house, and sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon thee."

"Doth this man forgive sins also?" cried the old priest Manasses, who was at the table. "He is a blasphemer, for God alone forgiveth sins. Will he call himself God?" And he rose quickly up, and rent his robe, and spat upon the floor in hate.

"Manasses," said Jesus, mildly, "tell me whether is it an easier thing to do—to say unto this man kneeling here, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Stretch forth thine hand whole as the other?'"

"It would be more difficult to do the latter," answered Manasses, surprised at the question.

"Who alone can do the latter, O priest?"

"God alone, who made him," answered Manasses, gazing upon the withered arm, which, shrivelled to the bone, hung useless at Eli's side.

"If, then, God alone healeth, and God alone forgiveth sins, both acts, Manasses, would be of God. Therefore," continued Jesus to the paralytic, "I say unto thee, Eli, stretch forth thy hand whole."

The man, gazing upon Jesus' face, and seeming to derive confidence from its look and power, made a sudden movement with his arm, which was bared to the shoulder, exhibiting all its hideous deformity, and stretched it forth at full length. Immediately the arm was clothed with flesh and muscles, the veins filled and leaped with the warm life-blood, and it became whole as the other. The change was so sudden that the miracle was done before we could see how it came to pass. Amazed and delighted, Eli bent his elbow, expanded and contracted his fingers, felt the flesh, and pressed it with his other hand, before he could persuade himself that he was healed. Then he lifted up his voice in praise to Jehovah, and casting himself at the feet of the Prophet, cried—

"Thou art not a man, but Gabriel, the angel of God!"

"Thou art now healed, Eli," said Jesus, solemnly ; " worship God, and go and sin no more."

"Master, thou knowest all things. Lo, my sin even was not hidden from thee, though I thought no eye beheld it. Men and brethren," he continued, addressing those who were assembled, "well did this holy Prophet, or angel of God, say unto me at the first my sins were forgiven, instead of bidding me stretch forth my hand ; for it was a great sin for which I was stricken with paralysis as a punishment. I had copied a parchment for the Levite Phineas, the tax-gatherer for the Temple service, and wickedly altered a figure in an amount, by which I thought to gain four shekels of silver. Instantly upon writing the last figure I felt a stroke of palsy, and my arm fell withered at my side. It was God's judgment upon me. This was eight years ago. No eye beheld the deed but God's and my own ; but I have repented in deep humiliation. Therefore, as my withered arm was for the punishment of my sin, well did my Lord, the mighty Prophet, say unto me my sin was forgiven. With forgiveness came the remission of my punishment ; for already at His word I felt the blood coursing through my parched veins."

On hearing this confession, Manasses cried in amazement—

"Truly, God is good to Israel. The hour of His promise is come. Verily, O Jesus of Nazareth, Thou art the Son of the Highest ! Forgive a worm of the dust, and pardon my sins also."

And the proud priest fell at Jesus' feet, and bowed his snow-white locks upon them in adoration and worship.

If, then, dear father, the secret sins of men are known to Jesus ; if He forgives sins as well as heals diseases ; if He removes the temporal penalties which God inflicts upon men for their iniquities, what name, what power, what excellence, shall we not ascribe to Him ? Shall we not, with Esaias, call Him "Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the Prince of Peace, who shall sit upon the throne of David, to establish

it with justice and judgment henceforth, even for ever?' Who, I repeat with Manasses, who forgiveth sins but God alone?

How shall I be able to remember and repeat all the other mighty works which Jesus has done in proof of His divine power? It hath been told you how He fed from a small basket of bread, the frugal provision which a lad had brought into the desert for his mother and his brothers, no fewer than five thousand men, besides women and children. This vast multitude had followed Him from the cities to listen to His teachings: there were people of all classes and tongues, including not a few Roman captains. When the mighty host was an hungered, He caused them to sit down on the grass, and from the basket He took forth bread, which increased to His hand as He distributed; so that when all had eaten there were gathered up twelve times as much in fragments as the little basket had held at the first. Who, dear father, but Messias could do this miracle? He who can thus create bread at His will, is He not the Lord of the harvests of the earth? My mind is overwhelmed, beloved father; I am filled with astonishment and fear when I reflect upon the might, power, and majesty of Jesus, and I dread to ask myself what more than man is He? Is He verily the awful and terrible Jehovah of Sinai, visible in the human form? Oh, wondrous and unfathomable mystery!—a man with almighty power, and manifesting the very attributes of Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, walking the earth, conversing with men, dwelling in our habitations, eating and drinking with us, and sleeping with the peaceful trustfulness of an infant beneath our roofs! I dare not trust my thoughts to penetrate the mystery in which He walks among us in the veiled Godhead of His power. His beloved disciple, John, says that Jesus has told him the day is not far off when this veil will be removed, and that we shall then know Him, who He is, and wherefore He has come into the world. The Passover is nigh

at hand, when we shall again behold the majesty of His presence.

I have just heard that Lazarus, the amiable brother of our cousins Mary and Martha, has suddenly fallen sick, and I close this letter to accompany my cousin Mary and her father to Bethany from whence they have sent us an earnest message of entreaty to come to them. May God preserve his life.

Your devoted daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXIV.

MY DEAR FATHER,

As I was closing my last letter to you, intelligence reached my uncle Amos that Lazarus, the amiable brother of Martha and Mary, was grievously sick. The message was brought by Elec, the Gibeonite slave, who, with tears in his eyes, told to us the sad news. My cousin Mary and I at once set forth to go to Bethany with him, uncle Amos offering his two mules that we might ride thither, and promising himself to come also after the evening service at the Temple, if the sickness of Lazarus should continue.

We were soon beyond the city walls on the road to Bethany, guided by the faithful servant, who continually urged us to ride faster; and then, lifting his hands and eyes, he lamented the danger of the young man, and the poverty of his sisters should he be removed from them; for, as I once wrote to you, dear father, he is their only support, his occupation being that of copying out rolls of the prophets for the use of the various synagogues.

Although we did not expect to be able to help our dear

relatives by hastening to them in their affliction, yet we hoped by our presence and pity to relieve much of the grief of the beloved sisters for their dear brother.

"Knowest thou, Elec, what this sickness is that hath so suddenly seized my cousin?" asked Mary, as we wound slowly up the path that leads around the steepest side of Olivet.

"In truth, noble lady, I know not," answered Elec, shaking his head. "He had just returned from the city, where he had been staying night and day for a week, labouring industriously to complete a copy of the five books of the blessed Moses for the Procurator's chief captain, for the which he was to receive a large reward in Roman gold."

"What is the name of this captain who seeketh to obtain our holy books?" I asked, hope half answering the question in my heart.

"It is Æmilius, the brave knight who was made a proselyte at the last Passover."

I rejoiced to hear this proof of the continued desire of the princely Roman knight to learn our sacred laws, dearest father. But Elec went on speaking, and said—

"It was his hard working to complete this copy which made him ill, for he slept not, nor ceased to toil, until he had finished it; and when he was come home with the silver-bound roll in his hand, and laid it upon the table before his sisters, he fell fainting to the ground. When they raised him up, a fierce fever was upon him, and he raved insomuch that he knew no one around him."

"Alas, poor Lazarus!" we both cried; and we urged our mules forward at a faster pace, our hearts bleeding for the sorrow of the sisters of our friend, and for his sickness.

I have already told you in a former letter, wherein I wrote concerning my visit to the house of Mary and Martha, how noble and good a man their brother is; how he is beloved by all who know him; cherished by the great for his honesty

and truth, while his manly beauty hath won the hearts of the maidens who are his sisters' friends. I told you how diligently he toiled for the maintenance of those dearly-loved sisters and that helpless mother, mindful only of their welfare, forgetful of his own. I also related how that his many virtues had won for him the friendship of the Prophet Jesus, who loved to make His abode in the humble cottage of Bethany ; and lofty must be the virtue and the excellence of him, dear father, who can win the holy friendship of this divine man of God. They have walked and discoursed together in sweet companionship, like Jonathan and David in the days of our country's glory.

At length, half an hour after passing the gate of the city, we drew near to Bethany, and beheld the roof of the house of Lazarus. Upon the house-top, gazing towards Jerusalem watching for us, we beheld the graceful form of Mary, who no sooner saw us than she waved her hands in earnest greeting. In a few moments we were in her arms, mingling our tears together.

"Doth he yet live?" I asked, scarcely daring to put the question, as she led us into the house.

"Yes, he lives, but fails hourly," answered Mary, with sad composure. "May God bless you both for hastening to me."

At this moment Martha's pale and mournful face, beautiful even in its pallor, appeared in the door of the inner room. When she beheld us she advanced, took both our hands in hers, and said in a touching whisper—

"You have come, sweet friends, to see my brother die."

She then led us into the room, where upon a couch lay stretched the sick man, whose danger had brought sorrow to the hearts of so many dear and loving ones around him. When we entered the chamber, he turned his lustrous eyes upon us, and smiled faintly a thankful welcome. Noble and beautiful as his countenance was in health, I thought that its

expression now, with his brilliant eyes and feverish cheek, had a more than earthly beauty.

"He has slept a little while," said Martha softly to me, "but the fever is consuming him. He has now closed his eyes again, and seems heavy with sleep; but his slumbers are restless, as you see. Sometimes he seems to think his dear friend, Jesus the Prophet, is by him; and again he talks of Rachel as if she were not here."

"And who is Rachel, dear Martha?" I asked, as I turned to follow her out of the room, leaving her brother to his restless tossing.

"Alas! it is for love of the gentle Rachel that he now lies there," she answered. "Yonder the sweet maiden kneeleth on the other side of his couch, her tearful face buried in the folds of the curtains. She leaves him not a moment; nay, though he does not seem to know she is there, if she but go from the room, he awakes directly and calls for her."

I turned and looked with tender pity on the graceful and half-concealed form of the young girl as she bent over his pillow, her hand clasped by his. At this moment she looked up, and directed her gaze towards me. Her tearful face was lovely to look upon, and her glorious large eyes shone like beaming stars of tenderness and love. Her hair would have been raven black, save that rays of golden brouze enriched its waving masses as the light played upon it. When our eyes met, she seemed to receive me into her soul, and my heart went forth to embrace hers. Lazarus now moved and murmured her name: she dropped her eyes, and bent over him like a ministering angel.

"Who is this maiden of marvellous beauty?" I asked of Martha, as we went out from the sick-chamber.

"The betrothed bride of our beloved brother," answered she. "Sit with me here in the shade, beneath this vine, and I will tell thee their sad story. Lazarus, as thou knowest, dearest Adina, is a writer in the Temple, and by his labours

hath earned bread for us, and hath given us more even than we required ; for all we have we owe to the love of this good son and brother. His love to us led him to forego the pleasure of all other company, as he said he found in our sweet bond of sisterly love all that he required for happiness. He therefore heeded not the voices of the maidens who are our friends ; and when, a few months since, our dear mother was gathered to her people, he said he felt it more than ever his duty to devote his life to our happiness. We would fain have moved him to seek a helpmate for life, knowing his noble nature, and how he well might render any daughter of Israel happy and honoured as his wife. But when urged unto this by us he would smile, and playfully say that he had but a very little heart, and that it would hold no love but for me and Mary.

"A few weeks ago, as he was sitting late and alone in the copying-room of the Temple, working upon a roll which the noble Æmilius had desired him to complete on a certain day, and for which he was to give him a large reward, he was startled by the sudden entrance of a young girl in great terror, who seemed to be flying from an enemy. Upon beholding him, she ran towards him, and, casting herself at his feet, implored his protection. Amazed and moved, he promised to aid her, but had hardly spoken the words before Annas entered and advanced towards her. His face was flushed with rage, and his voice was loud and fierce as he demanded her at the hand of my brother.

"'Nay, my lord Annas,' answered Lazarus boldly ; 'were a dove to seek shelter in my bosom from a hawk, I would protect it ; how much more then a distressed maiden of the daughters of Abraham ?' And he placed himself before her.

"'Darest thou protect her from *me* ? She is my child, a wicked and disobedient daughter. Give her up to me, young scrivener, or I will have thee sent to the lowest dungeon of the Castle of David'

"'Oh, save me! save me!' cried the young girl, as Annas advanced to seize her. 'I am not his child! I am the orphan daughter of Rabbi Levi, who left me and my estate to this false priest as a sacred charge: he hath done I know not what with my inheritance, and now he would sell me in unholy marriage to a Greek captain in the Roman legion, who offers him much gold for me. And but now, when he would have delivered me up to him, I fled to the altars of my God for the protection which man denied me; and not knowing the way, and lost in the labyrinth of the Temple, I ran hither. Rather than be given into the hands of this fierce and terrible Grecian, whom I have seen only to dread, I will cast myself down from a pinnacle of the Temple!'

"And to the amazement and terror of Lazarus, she bounded from the lattice, and stood upon the edge of the rock, which looks sheer three hundred feet down into the valley beneath.

"'Thou seest, O Annas, whereunto thy lust for gold will drive this maiden. Hath Israel sunk so low, that her chief priest will sell the daughters of the land for gold to the Gentiles? Is it thus thou givest protection to orphans? Leave her; and until I find a protector for her she shall be a sacred guest with my sisters in their humble abode.'

"'Thy life shall pay for this arrogance, young man! answered the priest. 'I have power, and will use it.'

"'Not to the danger and wrong of this maiden, my lord Annas, whom Jehovah will protect, since she has trustingly sought the shelter of His altars,' answered my brother, firmly. 'If thou continue to persecute her, I will appeal to the Procurator, Pontius Pilate, against thee. Thou knowest already that Roman justice knows how to punish Jewish guilt with terrible severity.'

"The result was," continued Martha, "that the wicked priest, alarmed by the threat of appeal to Pilate, gave up his present purpose of violence, and went his way, breathing threatenings against my brother. The same day Lazarus

conducted to our house the maiden whom you already guess to be Rachel. She has since then been our guest, and has won our hearts, as well as our dear brother's. Pilate, to whom Lazarus appealed, has thrown the shield of his protection between them and Annas. It was to obtain money, that he might soon wed Rachel, that our brother has at length sunk beneath the burden of his toil, and now lies at the brink of the grave."

"Is there no hope for him?" I asked.

"None! The physicians say he will never rise again."

"There is one hope left," I said, eagerly.

"What is that?" demanded Martha.

"Jesus!" I answered. "Send to Him, O Martha, and He will yet save thy brother, and raise him up to strength and health."

I had no sooner spoken than Mary, who overheard me, uttered a cry of joy.

"Yes, Jesus has the power to heal him, and Jesus loves him! He will come and save him the moment He hears of his danger."

Immediately Mary wrote on a slip of parchment these brief and touching words—

"Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick. Hasten to come to us, that he may live, for nothing is impossible with Thee."

This message was forthwith sent by the hands of a young friend to Bethabara beyond Jordan, where we have heard that Jesus at present abides. We have, therefore, no hope for our dear relative but in the power of the Prophet. I will write as soon as we hear concerning Him, dear father.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA

LETTER XXV.

MY DEAR AND HONOURED FATHER,

All here are bowed down by the deepest grief, for I have to tell to you the sorrowful news of the death of Lazarus. It is amid the plaintive moans of his bereaved sisters over his lifeless form, and with my tears almost blinding my overflowing eyes, that I write to you. The hand of the Lord hath fallen heavily upon this household, and stricken down its prop—smitten the oak around which these sisters clung like vines in dependence upon him, and in confiding trust in his wisdom and love. Now prostrate in the dust they lie, stunned by the sudden and mysterious stroke of God's hand.

In a former letter, dear father, I have spoken to you of the noble character of Lazarus; how that by writing in the scribes' room in the Temple he had supported his mother and sisters, while they, in their love for him, laboured with the needle in embroidery work, wherein they had great cunning, to lighten his labours. To the young men of Israel Lazarus was held up by the elders as a pattern of filial and brotherly virtue and honest industry; and to his sisters, Mary and Martha, other maidens were directed to look, for they were made examples of maidenly piety and diligent household thrift. Their humble dwelling was the home of hospitality and kindness; and thither the Prophet of God, Jesus, loveth to resort whensoever His great labours will permit Him. A holy friendship had sprung up between Him and Lazarus, who so loved the blessed Anointed One of God that he would readily have laid down his life for Him. I have told you, dear father, what a happy household I have seen here when Jesus completed the number; for He abode so

often with them when He was not preaching, or when He was willing to rest a day or two from His weary toil, that they came to regard Him as one of their family. Mary would devise ways to do Him honour, and to show her reverence and love, by working for Him silken covers for the books of the prophets which Lazarus would copy and present to Him, his beloved friend ; while Martha seemed ever to be thinking how she should minister to Him, by providing savoury meats for her table. But Jesus sought only to find listeners like Mary to His words of truth and wisdom—who loved to sit at His feet, and hear the golden words fall from His sacred lips ; He thought not of meats or drinks.

One day, when I, with Mary and Lazarus, was hearkening to His heavenly teachings, filled with wonder and amazement at His words, Martha, who was preparing the meal, came and desired that Mary would come and aid her ; but the dear, pious girl heeded not nor heard her, for she was feeding, forgetful of all else, upon the celestial food that fell from the lips of Jesus, who talked to us of the kingdom of God and the glories of heaven, and the necessity of holiness in those who would enter and dwell there. Martha, finding that Mary heeded her not, appealed to Jesus, saying somewhat angrily—

“Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone ? Bid her, therefore, that she help me.”

We turned wondering to hear her, who was usually so gentle and good, thus forget what was due to the presence of the Prophet ; and Lazarus was about to speak in excuse for his sister, who looked as if she were much troubled with the work of the household, when Jesus said kindly to her—

“Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things ; thy household takes up too much of thy time and thoughts. In this world but one care is truly worthy of the regard of men, and this is to provide needful sustenance for the soul, for the body perisheth. Mary hath chosen

more wisely than thyself. While thou carest much for the wants of the body, she careth for those of the spirit, and thus has that good part which shall not be taken away from her. Think not, beloved Martha, of sumptuous living for me, who have no earthly goods, nor even a place where to lay my head."

"Say not thus, oh! say not thus, dear Lord," cried Martha, suddenly bursting into tears at Jesus' touching words, and casting herself at His feet. "This house is Thy home—ever beneath its roof, while it sheltereth me, shalt Thou have where to lay Thy head. Say not so, my Lord."

We were much moved at Martha's pathetic earnestness. Jesus raised her up, and said lovingly—

"It is thy love for me, I well know, that maketh thee so careful and troubled to provide for me at thy bountiful table. But I have meat to eat that ye know not of. To teach the truths of God is to me meat and drink, for herein I am doing my Father's will who sent me."

I have written these things, dear father, concerning the abode of Lazarus, that you might know of the sweet friendship that dwelt in their bosoms towards Jesus, and of His familiar, brotherly love for them. You can now understand why, when Lazarus fell sick after his sore labour to copy the scrolls for the Roman centurion, a message was sent to Jesus, who was then in Bethabara beyond Jordan. A physician of Jerusalem, whom the noble Caiaphas had sent out to Bethany, on hearing of the sickness of the youthful secretary, to whom he was greatly attached (for all people did love him who knew him), had pronounced him in danger of sudden death from inward bleeding of the lungs.

You may ask, dear father, Why then should they send for Jesus when death was certain? Jesus was no physician; or if He had been, He could not reverse the fate of the dying young man.

Nevertheless, dear father at this heavy time they sent

to Jesus to come and heal him ; but it was not as a human physician they desired His presence, but as the miracle-working Prophet of God. It proves, and will, I trust, manifest to you, dearest father, that they who should best know His power, and who remembered the mighty miracle at Nain, believed assuredly that He could save their brother. It is those who have communed most with others who know them best. That the sisters of Lazarus sent a message presently to Jesus to interpose between death and his life, certainly showeth that they plainly believed He had not only the power of miracles, but power also to prevent death. They had beheld the wonders He wrought, and this gave them faith that He had power to save their brother ; while they knew that His love for Lazarus would assuredly move Him to exert it.

My last letter ended with informing you of the departure of the messenger. After he had gone out from the door, and the last echo of his horse's hoofs ceased to be heard by the listening ears of Martha, I re-entered the room where Lazarus lay. His face was white as marble. His large black eyes seemed to be twice their usual size, and to glow with double brilliancy. He breathed with difficulty, and every few moments we were compelled to raise his head, in order to free his mouth from the welling blood that was constantly bubbling up from the broken fountains of his life. Mary's tender privilege it was, assisted by Rachel, to render him this service of love. As she bent over him, looking downward with anxious fondness into his pale face, watching every shadow of the change that the black wing of advancing death cast over it, I thought I had never gazed on a more lovely being. Who, in beholding the angelic beauty of her face, the brilliant light of her dark eyes, which were now glittering with sisterly grief, the graceful expression of her proud head, and the fine outline of her figure, where love and majesty seemed blent into the likeness

of a second Eve—who, in beholding her, could fail to admire and love her? I forgot for the moment the dying man about whose form her snow-white arms were entwined, whose head was reclining on her bosom, her raven tresses all unbound and floating above him and over his pillow like a rich veil of sable silk.

I began this letter by telling you of the departure of the good, and generous, and pious Lazarus. He fell asleep in death as an infant sinks to slumber in its mother's arms, gradually failing from the loss of blood, and growing fainter and fainter, till his eyes closed heavily, his pulse ceased to throb, and his noble heart, no longer fluttering like a bird beneath the hand's light pressure, was at rest!

All too late was Jesus sent for! To-morrow Lazarus will be buried. Alas! how suddenly has perished the noblest young man in Judæa!

Farewell, dear father. My heart is sad; I can now write no more. The day after to-morrow I return to Jerusalem, and then I will write you again. You said in your last letter you would soon leave Egypt to journey into Judea, whence you would bring me back to my dear native valley of the Nile. The God of Abraham preserve you in your journey, and bring you in safety to

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXVI.

MY DEAR FATHER,

In my last letter I told you that Lazarus was dead. I write now to say that he who was dead is *alive!* *Lazarus liveth!* He whom I saw dead and buried, and shut up within the rocky cave of the tomb, is returned unto us again from

the dead ; and even now, while I am writing to you of this miracle, I hear his voice in the porch, as he is telling with profoundest awe what the Lord hath done for him, to a crowd of wondering people from Jerusalem. Even Pilate, the Roman Procurator, stopped his chariot at the door this morning, to see the Lazarus that was dead, and to have speech with him.

How, my dear father, how shall I find words to tell you all that hath come to pass within the last day? How shall I make you fully believe the marvellous things which I have taken in hand to tell? I know not how to begin the wonderful tale, for joy prevents me from speaking as one that would be understood. God hath, indeed, once more remembered His chosen people Israel, and shown His power among us.

You have already been told by me how quickly the sickness of Lazarus increased upon him, and how he soon died ; likewise that Jesus had been sent for at the first to come to him, in the hope that He might avert death. But Bethabara was a long day's journey, and ere the messenger reached Him the soul of His friend had fled. The next day Lazarus was buried. A very large concourse of people, from the town of Bethany and from Jerusalem, came to his burial, for he was well beloved. Even the chariot of the noble lady, Lucia Metella, the good and virtuous wife of Pilate, was there to do honour to the funeral of him who had no other renown than the fame of his virtues.

The funeral train was so very long that strangers, pausing, asked what great master in Israel, or what person of note, was being carried to the sepulchre.

Some answered, "Lazarus, the industrious scribe." Others said, "A young man who hath devoted his life to honour his mother." Others answered, as Lazarus himself, had he been alive, would have had them to do, "It is Lazarus, the friend of Jesus."

This, while he lived, was his proudest title; and dead, he would have desired no other. Dear father, may the day yet come when you shall deem such a title greater wealth than the gold of Egypt, or all the glory of your descent from Abraham and David.

The place where they were to lay him was the cave in which both his father and mother were buried. It was in a deep, shady vale, thickly shaded by cyprus, palm, and pomegranate trees; and a large tamarind grew, with its stately branches, spreading over the summit of the quiet place of sepulchre, while an abrupt cliff of Olivet hung impending above. From its top, to which I had mounted the evening before, looking towards Jerusalem, are to be seen the majestic heights of the distant Temple and the warlike battlements of the City of David, while the sunlight, flashing from the dazzling shield of a sentinel who was standing upon its loftiest watch-tower, caused the buckler to gleam like a lesser sun. The distant sound of a Roman bugle from the head of a cohort, which was just issuing through a defile, came softly and musically to our ears, as we stood in silence about the grove wherein we were to lay the dead. *Æmilius* the centurion was also there, wearing a white scarf above his silver breastplate in token of grief; for he also loved Lazarus. Of *Æmilius*, dear father, I have not of late spoken, for if I began to write of him, I should have no room in my letters for any other theme. You will soon see him, and judge for yourself how worthy he is of your friendship, and all the love of my heart. I heartily thank you, dearest father, for not refusing your consent to our union, but only withholding it until you reach Jerusalem. May blessed winds waft your bark swiftly to Joppa, that I may soon embrace you, and present to you the noble *Æmilius*, who is as faithful a worshipper of our God as if he were by birth, rather than by adoption, a son of Abraham.

When the train came to the grove, they raised the body of

the dead young man from the bier, and four youths, aided by Æmilius to support it at the head, carried it into the cavern. A moment they lingered on the threshold, that Mary and Martha might take one more look, imprint on its icy-cold lips one last kiss, press once more the unconscious head to their loving and broken hearts. I also gazed upon him, weeping at their sorrow, and mourning to behold so noble a face, beautiful as chiselled alabaster, about to be given up to the loathsome worm of the charnel-house. He was so good, so excelling all his companions in all things great and pure, so lofty in character, that my tears flowed freely.

The young men moved slowly forward into the gloom of the cave. Mary rushed in, and with dishevelled hair cried—

“Oh, take him not away for ever from the sight of my eyes! Oh, my brother, my brother, would that I had died for thee! I were willing to lie down with the worm and call it my sister, and sleep in the arms of death, as on the breast of my mother, so thou couldst live! Thou wert happy and honoured, and shouldst have lived! Oh, brother, brother! let them not take thee for ever from the sight of my eyes! Without thee, what good shall my life be to me?”

Æmilius entered the tomb, and tenderly raising her from the body, on which she had cast herself in the bitterness of her wild grief, he led her forth, and, beckoning to me, placed her in my arms.

Martha bore her grief with more composure; but her face expressed how deeply she mourned thus to say adieu for ever to her only brother—her beloved Lazarus, who had been the strong rock which had stood firmly against the shock of the stormy billows of this life when they threatened her and Mary; who was a tower of strength to them in the day of trouble, and a rich fountain of delight in their home.

The body, being placed in a niche hollowed out in the rock, was decently covered with the grave-clothes, all but the calm face, which was bound about with a snow-white napkin.

Maidens of the village came forward and cast flowers upon his head, and many, many were the sincere tears which bore tribute to his worth, both from manly eyes and from those of virgins.

When the burial ceremonies were ended, five strong men rolled the heavy stone door before the entrance to the cave, and so fastened it, by fitting it into a socket, that it would require a like number to remove it.

As they were returning with heavy hearts from paying this last duty to the beloved dead, the sun sank beyond the blue hills of Ajalon in the west, in a lake of gold. To behold the sunset and to seek rest for our hearts, I walked apart with Mary to the top of the hill, from whence I beheld the sun gilding the pinnacle of the Temple, and making it seem like a gigantic spear pointed to the sky. From the Levites, at the hour of evening sacrifice, came, softened by the distance, the deep song of the Temple service, uttered by a thousand voices. The cloud from the altar sacrifice ascended slowly into the still air, and, catching the splendour of the sun's last beams, shone like the pillar of cloud and of fire which once stood above the tabernacle in the wilderness. The labourers in the harvest were hastening towards the gates, lest they should be shut out for the night by the Roman guards, and dwellers in the village were hurrying forth, lest they should be held in the city all night.

There was a holy quiet in the air that seemed in touching sympathy and harmony with the scene in which we had just borne a part. Mary leant sobbing upon my shoulder, as I sat upon a rock, giving my heart up to the sweet peacefulness of the hour. We were alone, save that Æmilius had ridden after us, troubled for our safety, and sat upon his horse near by, gazing upon the beauty of the evening scene. Martha and my cousin, with John, had returned to the now desolate home of which Lazarus had been the light and the honour.

"I am calmer now," said Mary, raising her head after

a while, and looking into my face, her beautiful eyes glittering brimful with tears. "I am content now. The peace of the sweet holy skies seems to have descended and entered my heart. The regions of my soul are as clear and pure and peaceful as those above me. The spirit of Lazarus pervades and hallows all I see. I will weep no more. He is happy now, very happy; and let us try to be holy and go to him, for he cannot come back to us."

At this moment we heard the heavy tramp of horses' hoofs. Æmilius, wakened thereby from his ponderings, sat up and laid his hand upon his sword; for though the Romans have the mastery in our land as conquerors, they are not loved, and scarcely a week passes without some conflict between the soldiers of the Legion and the common people among the Jews; and even the officers have been attacked when they have ridden forth from Jerusalem without a guard.

Æmilius, therefore, who had with him only his white-haired Celtic servant Frwynn, sat alike prepared to combat a foe or to welcome a friend. The next moment, around a rock projecting from the shoulder of Olivet, appeared a horseman in the wild warlike garb of an Ishmaelite of the desert, waving a long spear; then another and another, similarly clad and armed, and mounted on beautiful horses of the desert, came in sight. These were immediately followed by a tall young man of a fierce countenance, in a rich garb, half Grecian, half Arabic, though his handsome dark features were without doubt Israelitish. He rode a proud Abyssinian charger, and sat upon his back like the heathen Centaur I have read of in the Latin books which Æmilius has given me. Upon seeing us he drew rein, and smiled and waved his jewelled hand with splendid courtesy; but at the sight of Æmilius his dark eyes flashed, and standing erect in his stirrups, he shook his glittering falchion towards him, and with a cry like the sound of a trumpet, rode full upon him.

The brave Roman soldier repelled the attack by turning

his horse slightly, and catching the point of the weapon upon the blade of his short sword.

"We meet at last, O Roman!" cried this wild, dashing chief, as he wheeled his horse like lightning, and once more rode upon the iron-armed Roman knight.

"Ay, Barabbas, and with joy I hail thee," answered Æmilius, putting a bugle to his lips.

At hearing the clear voice of the bugle awaking the echoes of Olivet, the fierce robber chief, of whom you have heard me speak before, dear father, said haughtily and with a look of scorn—

"Dost thou, a knight of the tribune and commander of a legion, call for aid when I offer thee equal battle hand to hand, not asking aid of my own men's spears?"

"I know no equal battle with a robber. I would hunt thee as I would the wolf and the wild beasts of thy deserts," replied Æmilius; and he rode against him.

At a signal from the robber chief, his four men, who had reined up a short distance off, near the tomb of Lazarus, sent up a shrill yell, like the scream of an eagle, that made my heart stand still, and then rode forward like the wind to overthrow Æmilius.

I had remained as one stupefied at being thus made to behold this sudden battle; but on seeing this danger I ran to his side, scarce knowing how I reached him.

"Retire, dear Adina," he said, in a voice of authority. "I must defend both thee and myself, and these barbarians will give my hands enough to do."

As he spoke, he turned his horse's head to meet the four-fold shock, and I escaped, I know not how, resolved to hasten to Bethany for succour. But Heaven sent us aid. A troop of the body-guard of Pilate, which Æmilius had left in an olive-grove to refresh themselves and their horses, hearing the summons of their chief's bugle, came galloping up the hill—a score of armed and bearded Gauls. At the

sight, Barabbas and his party fled like wild pigeons pursued by a flight of cruel hawks. Barabbas, nevertheless, turned more than once to fling back defiance at his foes. Æmilus galloped up to him, seized the crimson sash which encircled his waist, and held him thus, both fighting as they rode. The Roman troop then came up; and after a great fight the famous robber chief was taken alive, though bleeding with many wounds, and was bound with his own sash to the column of one of the tombs. Æmilus was but slightly hurt; and I saw the bright joy which sparkled in his eyes, because he had at last captured the bold robber who had so often before escaped him, and to get possession of whom he had till now tried in vain. At length he had in his power the man who had been the terror of all the country between Jericho and Jerusalem. The prisoner still smiled in proud defiance, and looked haughty, even in his bonds. His men were also taken; and after giving them, with their chief, into the charge of his soldiers to be conveyed to the prisons of Jerusalem, Æmilus came back to me and Mary, and accompanied us to the house of the two sisters.

It was told unto us that Barabbas, made bold by the report that a rich company of merchants were to leave Jerusalem at daybreak, had advanced near the city with a few followers, to lie in wait for their coming forth, and so to follow on their path until they should have entered a defile in the mountains of Bethel where his troop was hidden; and it was while seeking to hide among the tombs in the side of Olivet that he had come suddenly upon us. Æmilus says that he will assuredly be crucified for his numerous crimes. Dreadful punishment! and for one so young as this desert robber to come to such a shameful and agonising death! doomed to hang for hours under the hot sunbeams by his lacerated hands and feet, till death at last comes when all his strength is gone! I am amazed that so polite and humane a people as the Romans can inflict such a cruel and agonising

death, even upon malefactors. In the last week, as I was walking with my uncle Amos among the sepulchres of the kings outside of the north gate, being prevented from re-entering the gate by the passage of a Roman troop marching to suppress an insurrection in Samaria, we passed round by the western gate, to reach which we were obliged to cross the Place of Calvary, whereon stood two crosses, on one of which hung the still living body of a seditious Jew, crucified by order of the Procurator. He writhed horribly, and his groans penetrated my heart. I covered my eyes and my ears, and begged Rabbi Amos to hurry with me from this fearful sight. Yet it was in front of the city and of the road; and many that passed by, both women and men, lingered to gaze. Wicked indeed must the life of a man have been, that he should be doomed justly to suffer such a death.

In this letter, dearest father, I intended to relate to you the manner of recalling Lazarus to life; but it is already filled with so much, that I defer the history till I write again. But believe me that Lazarus is living and well, and thousands are crowding into Bethany and thronging the house, to inquire concerning this great thing that has happened. Suffice it for me to tell you at the close of this letter that it was Jesus who raised him from the dead, that Prophet of God of whom you are yet in doubt whether He be the Messiah or no. My father, is He who raised the widow's son of Nain—who walked on the sea a league to His disciples' boats—who stilled the tempest by the word of His power—who fed five thousand men with five loaves of bread—who healed the nobleman Chuzza's son—who raised the dead daughter of the Galilean ruler, Jairus—who restores the deaf, the blind, the dumb, by a word, a touch, a look—around whose path and life are gathered together such a multitude of testimonies to His divine power, in prophecies, in mighty works, and in wondrous miracles—is He only a common man? Is He a deceiver? Oh, is He not, is He not the Son of God—the Messiah of the prophets—the Lion of the

tribe of Judah—the Deliverer and future Glory of Israel? Is He not the One whose day of splendour Abraham saw afar off? Is He not Shiloh, whom the patriarch Jacob beheld rise up to wield the sceptre of Israel? Is He not the mighty Son of God, of whom the burning pen of Esaias writes in these prophetic words: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called WONDERFUL, COUNSELLOR, the MIGHTY GOD, the EVERLASTING FATHER, the PRINCE OF PEACE; who shall sit upon the throne of David, and establish it with justice and judgment from henceforth, even for ever?”

Think of these things, dear father; oh! ponder them well, and let not the poverty of Jesus be a stumbling-block to your faith in Him as Messias. That He has raised Lazarus from the dead is alone evidence enough to me that He is the SON OF GOD.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXVII.

MY DEAR FATHER,

Your letter has filled me with joy unutterable. It was brought to me this morning by the courier from Egypt, with the package, both being safely placed in my hands nine days only after they quitted your own. I kissed them and pressed them again and again to my heart, remembering that they were so lately touched by your fingers. The letter assures me that you are certainly to go forth from your home at the new moon, and after a few days' delay at Gaza, that you will be with me

before many days have passed. This letter I shall send to meet you at Gaza.

Three years, three long years, dearest father, have passed since I last beheld your beloved face. Ah ! when you come, how I shall love you, and hang upon you, and watch every dear look, and fondly listen for your every word ! It is true my uncle Amos has been even as a father to me : he shows me all lovingkindness and goodness ; but no love or care can fill the place of a father's.

When I ponder on the wondrous scenes I have beheld, the great events which I have witnessed since I first came to Jerusalem three years ago with the caravan of Rabbi Ben Israel, I do not regret my long absence from you ; for to have been in Jerusalem during these last days is a boon that Abraham and all the patriarchs and prophets of God would have coveted. For in these days Messias has walked the earth, clothed with divine power, and hath gone in and out of Jerusalem before all eyes, performing miracles and doing mighty works, the like of which never man did. I have learned to love and honour that blessed Prophet as the Son of the Highest and the Anointed of the Lord ; I have sat at His feet and listened to His heavenly teachings, and the wisdom of His sacred lips has made me wise unto life.

But I have not yet made known to you the manner of the greatest miracle of power and love which He has wrought—the raising up of Lazarus from the dead ; and I will here recount this wonder as it came to pass.

When Mary and Martha, upon finding Lazarus given over by the physicians as one past hope of recovery from his grievous sickness, had sent the message to Jesus, as I have already told you, they began to be more cheerful with newborn hope, saying—

“If our dear Rabbi, the holy Prophet, comes, He will heal him with a word, as He has healed so many of the sick.”

“Yes ; to many whom He knew not He has given health by

a touch," remarked Martha; "how much more Lazarus, whom He loveth as a brother. Oh, that the messenger may journey forward with all haste!"

"If Lazarus should die ere He come," timidly remarked my gentle cousin, the betrothed of John the disciple, "He could bring him to life again, even as He restored the son of the widow at Nain."

"Yes, without doubt, unless it were too late," answered Martha, shrinking at the thought that her brother should die; "but if he be long dead it will be impossible."

"Nothing is impossible with Jesus," cried Mary, her eyes brightening with trusting faith.

Thus the hour passed between mingled hope and fear; but ere Jesus came, lo! the mantle of death was laid over the face of their brother. "Lazarus is dead, and Jesus is far away!" was the bitter and mournful cry raised by the bereaved sisters, as they wept in each other's arms.

The next day the burial took place, as I have described already to you, dear father, in my last letter, and yet no messenger came from Jesus. On the morning of the third day the man returned, and said that he had found the Prophet on the farther bank of Jordan, where John had baptised, abiding in a humble cottage nigh unto Bethabara, with His disciples, teaching the things of the kingdom of God and unfolding the prophecies to many who resorted to Him.

The bearer of the sad tidings from the two sisters told us how he delivered his simple and touching message—

"Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick."

"And what said He?—how did His countenance appear?" asked Martha of the man.

"He did not marvel, but said calmly to me, 'Son, I know it. This sickness shall not be unto death: it shall be for the glory of God; for hereby will my Father have me to be glorified, that men may see and believe truly that I came out from God.'"

"What said He more?" asked Martha, sorrowfully and doubting.

"Nothing more, lady; and having given my message, I departed," answered the man.

"Alas! He knew not how grievously sick His friend was," said Mary, "or He would not have said it was not unto death but would surely have hastened with you."

"Thy Lord should know all things, daughter," said a priest who stood by. "This ignorance of the danger of Lazarus, and this assertion that he would not die, show that this man is not of God. Is not Lazarus dead and buried?"

On hearing these words, Martha's faith seemed for a moment shaken; but Mary zealously defended her brother's friend, the holy Prophet, saying that when Jesus should come and speak for Himself, He would make His words plain, and show them to have been spoken with wisdom.

With what deep sorrow they mourned for their brother! and their tears fell the faster for that they felt assured he would not have died had Jesus been there. Their faith and confidence in Him underwent a sore trial as day after day passed, and no tidings were heard from Him.

"He has forgotten us," said Martha, "else He would be here to console us in our deep affliction, though He came not to heal our brother."

"Nay, sister, think not so hardly of the blessed friend of Lazarus," said Mary, in soothing tones, as she caressed her elder sister. "I feel that if He had seen fit, He could have raised up our brother by speaking the word, even at Bethabara. It was not needful He should see him to heal him; for dost thou remember how He healed Lucius the centurion's son? Yet at the time He was a day's journey's distant from him."

"And why, oh! why did He not save Lazarus?" exclaimed Martha, bitterly.

"In that He did not, sweet sister," answered Mary, gently,

"we may know it was not meet He should. Did He not say to the messenger, the sickness of Lazarus should be to the glory of God?"

"But not his death, Mary, not his *death*! He is dead four days already; and how can the grave give glory to the power of Jesus? Will He raise him up, since corruption hath begun, and we have laid him in the cold sepulchre? Oh, speak not to me of the Prophet! Either He loved not Lazarus, or He had not the power to save him. Nay, leave me, Mary, to the bitterness of my grief."

"Ah, dear Martha, how soon hath thy faith in Jesus, when tried, come to nought!" said Mary, bending upon her sister, from her dark, earnest eyes, looks of sad reproach. "Shall one day destroy the fruit of years of holy friendship for Him? Because He answered not our prayer to come to Lazarus, think you He loved him not, and careth not for our anguish? He is wronged by your reproof, and injured by your lack of faith in His love and care for us."

"He can heal a proud and rich ruler's son, but He heeds not the cry of the poor and lowly," perseveringly answered Martha, with looks full of despair.

"Ah, sister, God forgive thee, and may thy grief excuse thy words. Though He slay me I will trust in Him," exclaimed Mary, laying her hand upon her sister's shoulder, while the light of a holy confidence beamed forth from her shining and tearful eyes.

While they were thus discoursing, there came one running swiftly towards the house, who, breathless with haste, cried to them and to the Jews sitting there, who had come to comfort them concerning their brother—

"The Prophet! the Nazarene! He comes!"

Almost at the same moment Elec the Gibeonite entered, and said—

"Jesus, Messiah of God, is at hand! Already He entereth the village, followed by His disciples."

At this intelligence the mourners who sat with Mary and Martha in the vine porch rose up to go and meet Him ; but Martha, crying out aloud with sudden joy, sprang up more quickly than they : she reached the street, and flying with great speed, came where Jesus was.

Mary, who had received the news without showing that she was moved otherwise than with the secret and holy joy of a heart that had always trusted in her Lord, instead of hastening to meet Him, or rending her hair with grief, like her sister, proceeded to prepare a room for the hospitable entertainment of the beloved Prophet when He should come in, thus taking upon her Martha's office ; and when she had prepared all, she sat down with me in the house, her heart filled with joy, and her face showing forth her calm and quiet happiness.

"I knew He would come ! I knew He would not leave or forsake us in our deep sorrow, Adina," she said to me two or three times ; and as the confused noise of advancing footsteps fell upon our ears, her heart beat quicker ; and, with the glow that joy and expectation spread over her face, I thought she looked more beautiful than ever.

When Martha had come nigh unto Jesus, whom she met just entering Bethany, walking on the dusty road with four of His disciples, and looking weary and travel-worn, she ran and threw herself at His feet, crying—

"Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

Jesus, taking her hand, raised her up, and said to her, while He seemed deeply moved by her grief—

"Lazarus sleepeth, Martha. I am now come to awake him out of his sleep."

"Lord, if my brother slept only, he would not have been buried. He is dead, and hath been dead four days."

"To those whom my Father loveth death is but as sleep. The good die not. Lazarus is not dead, but sleepeth ; and he shall rise again."

"I know, O Rabboni, that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus then said to her, as He raised His eyes toward heaven—

"I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this, daughter?"

"Yea, Lord, I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world. I know that whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee."

"Corruption and the worm have begun their work," said a proud and unbelieving Pharisee standing near, on hearing this: "whatever may have been the state of the ruler's daughter, and the son of her of Nain, Lazarus the scribe, at least, is *dead*."

To these scoffing words Jesus made no reply, but, turning to Martha, said softly—

"I rejoice that thy faith in me hath come back into thine heart, for thou hast doubted, O daughter, in that I came not at thy call. It was needful that thy brother should die, that I might display the power of God in me. This day my Father shall be glorified, and the world shall truly know that I come from Him who is Life and the Giver of life. Go thou and tell thy sister that I am here, and would have her to come and speak with me."

Martha then, overjoyed, and wondering that Jesus should have known her thoughts, insomuch as to reproach her for her little faith, hastened to her sister, and entering the house, cried—

"I have seen the Lord. He calleth for thee, Mary. Come and see Him as He sits by Isaiah's fountain, near the market-place."

Her words made my heart to bound with an indescribable thrill. Mary rose quickly, and went out, scarce able to walk,

her limbs failing for trembling joy, and a sweet, undefined hope of she knew not what immeasurable and unutterable happiness about to come upon her. Certain of her Jewish friends from Jerusalem at that moment met her at the door, not knowing that Jesus had entered Bethany, and began to comfort her, and to ask her if they also should go with her to weep at the grave of Lazarus, for they said one to another—

“She goeth unto the grave, to weep there.”

“She goeth to see Jesus, the friend of Lazarus, for He calleth her,” answered Martha, smiling with eagerness, and speaking with a cheerfulness very opposite to her late deep grief.

Mary hastened to where Jesus sat by the fountain, discoursing with those about Him concerning the resurrection of the dead. Upon seeing Mary, He extended His hand, but she sank at His feet in tears.

“Lord,” she said, in her sister’s words, and deeply moved, “if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.”

Then bowing her head to the edge of the marble basin, she wept very sore. The Jews, men and women, who stood about touched with her sorrow, also wept, and glittering tears coursed their way down the face of John, the beloved disciple, who stood near.

Jesus sighed deeply and groaned in spirit as He beheld her grief and the mourning of the Jews with her. His sacred countenance was marred with the anguish of His soul.

“Arise, and let us go to the grave where he lieth,” He said to them. “Where have ye laid him?”

“Come, dear Lord, and see,” answered Mary, holding Him by the sleeve of the robe, and reverently yet eagerly drawing Him towards the place of the tombs in the Vale of Olivet.

In the meanwhile, at home, Martha had been diligently, and with strange cheerfulness, preparing the chamber of

Lazarus. She swept it, and garnished it with fresh flowers which she gathered in the little garden.

"This is the rose he tended and loved. This is the violet which blooms immortal. I will place it upon his pillow," she said, with a bright smile, softened by the most lovely look of peace; while hope made her eyes to shine like twin morning stars at the dawning of a glorious day. She spoke almost in a whisper, and moved to and fro without noise.

"For whom is this preparation, Martha—for Jesus?" I asked.

"Ah, no! The holy Prophet's chamber is ready. Mary has prepared that. This is the chamber of Lazarus, and I am decorating it for him."

"Dost thou truly believe that he is coming back from the dead?" I asked, between doubt and strange fear.

"I verily believe it. I know that nothing is impossible with Him. I doubt no longer. My heart is fixed. He will raise up my brother, and this day he will sit down at our table with us again, and this night rest his head in peaceful slumber upon this pillow which I am strewing with the flowers he loved. Never had house two such guests as we shall receive this day—the Messiah of God and one come back alive from the dead!"

Immediately we heard the noise of the multitude passing by, and it being told us that Jesus was going to the grave, Martha, embracing me with a happy smile, drew me away with her to follow the blessed Prophet to the tomb. All Bethany went forth with Him. Wonder and expectation were on every face. There was no outcry, no lawless uproar in the vast concourse, but rather a subdued murmur of wonderment and awe.

How shall I describe Jesus as He then appeared? He was clad in a blue robe, woven without seam throughout, the loving gift of the two sisters. His face was pale and sad, yet

a divine majesty rested thereon, so that His lofty forehead was like a throne to look upon. His holy, earnest eyes were full of sorrow. His quivering lips betrayed the effort He made to control His heart's deep grief.

Slowly He moved onward, and entering the burial-place soon stood before the tomb of His beloved friend.

For a few moments He gazed in silence upon the closed stone door of the cave. There reigned an expectant hush among the vast throng. Mary knelt at His feet, gazing up into His countenance with a beautiful look of hope and trust. Martha drew softly near, and fell upon her knees by the side of her sister. Jesus looked tenderly upon them, and then resting His eyes upon the tomb, He wept: large glittering tears rolled down His cheeks, and glanced from His flowing beard to the ground. I knelt by the side of the sisters.

"Behold how He loved him!" whispered the Jews present. Others said, "Could not this prophet, which opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

Jesus, heaving a deep sigh, now came nearer the grave. It was, as I have told you, a cave, and a stone lay upon it. With a movement of His right hand to those who stood by, He said in a tone that, though low, was heard by the whole people, so solemn was the surrounding stillness—

"Take ye away the stone."

"Lord," said Martha, "by this time the body is full of corruption, for he hath been dead four days."

"Daughter," said Jesus, looking on her, "said I not to thee, a little while since, that if thou wouldst believe that I could raise up thy brother, thou shouldst see him alive again? Believe, and thou shalt behold the power of God."

The men then rolled away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and laid it aside. The dark vault seemed a place of horror, and so corrupt was the air that rushed out that all

fell back from it save Jesus and Mary, retiring several steps from the entrance.

Jesus stood looking into the cave, where, as our eyes became accustomed to the darkness within, we could discern the corpse of Lazarus, covered with the grave-clothes, and his face bound with a napkin.

Raising His hands towards heaven, and lifting up His eyes, which were yet moist with tears, Jesus spoke in a voice of indescribable pathos and power of appeal, and with the most awful reverence, words like these :—

“Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard me. And I know that Thou hearest me always ; but because of the people who stand by do I offer unto Thee this prayer, that they may believe that the power I have cometh from Thee, and that they may believe that Thou hast sent me. And now, O holy Father, may I glorify Thee on the earth with the power which Thou hast given me.”

He then turned towards the tomb, and, stretching forth His hand, cried with a loud voice that made every heart to quake—

“LAZARUS, COME FORTH !”

My blood stood still in my veins. Scarcely daring to lift my eyes, I nevertheless looked, and beheld—what all eyes also saw : he that had been dead rose and stood up within the vault, turned with his face towards us, and came forth, wrapped hand and foot with the grave-clothes, and his face bound about with the napkin. His countenance was like marble for whiteness, and his eyes, which were open, beamed with unearthly light.

On beholding him, a general shriek burst from the lips of the people, and there was a terrified backward rush of all who were nighest to the cave.

Martha, wildly crying her brother's name, fell forward on her face and fainted.

“Loose him and let him go,” said Jesus, calmly, addressing

the speechless and amazed men who had taken away the stone.

Mary was the first who had the courage to draw near to Lazarus ; and as she began removing the napkin that bound his head, others, encouraged by her example, hastened to unswathe his arms and feet. In a few moments he was freed from his outer grave-clothes, and the healthful colour of his cheeks returned, his lips flushed brilliantly with red, and his eyes beamed with wonder and love as he gazed about him. Perceiving Jesus, he was about to cast himself at His feet in thankfulness (for he seemed to have a knowledge of all that had happened) ; but the mighty Prophet drew him to His embrace and kissed him. Mary, at first shrinking with awe, now threw herself, blind with tears of joy, into her brother's arms. Martha was raised up by him, and his loved voice breathing tenderly into her ear recalled her to the happiness she could scarce believe real.

But my pen can find no words wherewith to express the joy and gratitude unspeakable, the love and praise, that filled our hearts. Lazarus, the new-risen from the dead, blooming in the rich fulness of complete health, walked homeward by the side of Jesus, while the sisters hung upon him with deep thankfulness overflowing their happy hearts. Now the great Prophet, now Lazarus, and now Jesus again, received the plaudits of the vast throng of people. Hymns in praise of Jehovah were chanted as we passed through the streets, and so many fell down to worship Jesus that it was long before we crossed the threshold of the dwelling ; which Jesus did indeed enter with Lazarus by his side ; and Martha did see her brother sit at the table ; and that night his head rested in deep slumber upon the flower-strewn pillow which her faith and love had prepared for him.

Thus, my dear father, have I given you an account of this mighty miracle, the report whereof has filled all Jerusalem with amazement, and must lead the priests and the people

to acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah of God, Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write. Do you doubt longer, my dear father?

This letter will meet you at Gaza. I hope soon to embrace you.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXVIII.

MY DEAR FATHER,

Your letter from Gaza was safely placed in my hands this morning, by the courtesy of the Roman courier of the Procurator. I read it with deep grief and with feelings of the saddest disappointment. Instead of the letter, I hoped to see you in person; and when I heard Elec call out that a horseman had dismounted at the gate, I ran down into the court, crying, "My father, my dearest father!" and when, instead of rushing into your embrace, I was met by the mailed and helmeted figure of an armed Roman, oh! you may judge of the sorrow in my heart. I read your letter with tears; but you have taught me to bear patiently what must be endured, and I have schooled my impatience till the God of our fathers shall bring you, in His own good time, to your loving and longing daughter. I trust that the two Arabian merchants, from Eziongeber, whom you are tarrying to see, will not be long journeying to Gaza, and that on their arrival you will speedily conclude the commerce which you say it behoveth you not to reject. In the meanwhile I will try and wait with serenity and peace for the day of your coming, but continue to write to you as the only solace which can compensate for not beholding and speaking with you. As with

all my letters, dearest father, the theme of this will be Jesus, whose claims to be the Messiah I unspeakably rejoice to hear you begin to regard with more favourable eyes ; for in your last letter I found these words, which made my heart bound with joy :—

“ Were I to resist the testimony of the miracles which this wonderful Nazarene prophet has evidently done, especially the raising of Lazarus the scribe from the dead, I fear I should be fighting against God ; for who can restore life to the dead but Jehovah alone ? The fame of the raising of Lazarus, as well as many of the other miracles which he has done, hath reached me by other ways than your letters, and the accounts fully confirm all you have so zealously written. Nay, there is now tarrying here in Gaza, on his return from Damascus to Alexandria, my friend Abraham Gehazi, the silk merchant, who was passing through Bethany when this was done, and, halting with his party, witnessed the miracle. He spoke with Lazarus, and confesses to me that Jesus is evidently a mighty prophet sent from God. I am willing to believe this also, my daughter ; and when I behold him I am ready to yield unto him the reverence I would pay to Isaiah or Daniel, were they now alive. That he is the Christ I cannot yet believe ; for Christ is to be a Prince and a King, and to sit upon the throne of David, and give laws to the nations ; before whom every crowned head shall fall prostrate, every knee bow in reverence, and at whose feet the sceptres of the earth shall be laid in submission. A humble carpenter’s son, prophet of God though he may be, cannot be in very truth the Messias. Turn to Esaias, and behold how the prophet’s words glow with the brightness of the vision he beholds of the power, glory, and dominion on earth, of the Son of David. How can these words of fire apply to the prophet whom you love to honour ? That the Spirit of the Lord is upon him, and that mighty works show forth themselves in him, cannot be disputed ; but that he is the Shiloh

of Jacob, the kingly Lion of the tribe of Judah, I cannot indeed believe ; for, if I accept him as Messias, neither I, nor my countrymen in Israel, nor the scribes, nor the fathers in Jerusalem, have read the prophets aright, but rather with eyes blinded ; for to Jesus they cannot point, unless it be that we have altogether misunderstood what is written in Moses and the prophets, and the Psalms, concerning the Christ."

This, my dear father, is a part of your letter, and I repeat your words that I may reply to it, if I can do so without presumption.

You confess, dearest father, that you are at length convinced Jesus is a prophet, and that God is with Him, for He could not do such great miracles except by the power of God. Now, if God worketh together with Jesus ; if God, so to speak, lends Him His power, endows Him with His own greatness, so that, like God, He can heal, still the tempest, restore the sick, raise the dead from their graves, it is because God has chosen Him from among men, and clothed Him with His own mighty and divine power. Now, if He chose Him and invested Him therewith, it is evident that God delights in Him, that He loveth Him, and would greatly honour Him. To have received from the Lord God Jehovah such mighty powers Jesus must be good, must be holy, and pious, and full of those virtues in which the Almighty delighteth ; in a word, God must be well pleased and content with whatsoever is done by Him.

Now Jesus, thus favoured by God, whose power to work miracles, as you yourself, my dear father, have confessed, must be conferred by Jehovah alone, asserts distinctly and everywhere that He is Messias, the Son of God, the Shiloh of Israel, of whom Moses and the prophets have written. Besides claiming for Himself this high character, He was heard, by both my uncle Amos and myself, in the synagogue at Bethany, two days after He raised Lazarus from the dead, to

read from Esaias the following words, and apply them to Himself, as He had done before at Nazareth :—

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor, He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.”

When He had read this prophecy, which all our people, dear father, do acknowledge to refer to Messias when He cometh, He closed the book, gave it again to the attendant scribe, and sat down. The synagogue was thronged, so that people trod one upon another ; for the fame of His miracles had brought people to hear and see Him, not only from Jerusalem, but from all Judæa and Decapolis, and beyond Jordan ; nay, His fame, it seemeth, is spread abroad in all the world. The eyes of all were waiting upon Him, and all ears were ready to hear what He should speak. He then said—

“This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. Ye ask me, O scribes and men of Israel, to tell you plainly who I am—whether I am the Christ or no. What saith the prophet of Messias when He shall come? Ye have even now heard His words. If such works as he prophesieth do show forth themselves in me, know ye not who I am?”

Here one in the assembly cried out—

“Tell us plainly, art thou the Christ the Son of the Highest?”

At this direct inquiry there was a deep silence to hear the reply.

Jesus seemed about to answer, when a man, who stood near the desk, and in whom was an unclean spirit, cried out, with a shrieking voice of mingled terror and awe—

“Let me alone. Torment me not, thou Jesus of Nazareth. Art thou come hither to destroy me? I know thee who thou art—the Holy One of God.”

Jesus rebuked the devil which possessed the man (the man indeed was Jaius, a Roman proselyte of the gate, who had long spread terror in the suburbs by his exceeding madness and ferocity), and said, in the voice of a master who commandeth a bond-slave—

“Hold thy peace, Satan. The Son of Man needeth not the testimony thou givest. Hold thy peace, and come out of the man.”

At this word the man uttered a fearful cry of despair and rage, and, foaming at the mouth, cast himself, or rather was thrown down by the devil within him, to the ground, where, after a moment's terrific struggle, with writhings of great bodily pain, he lay as one dead. Jesus took him by the hand, and he stood up, and looking in the face of the Prophet, full of wonder, burst forth into tears of thankfulness, and cried—

“I am escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and I am escaped. God hath delivered me out of the hand of my enemy.”

He then sat down at the feet of Jesus, calm, happy, and in his right mind. All gazed on him with wonder, while the mass of the people gave a great shout, for they were all amazed, and said, “This is none other than the Christ, the Son of David. This is the King of Israel.” While the loud shouts of “Hosanna! hosanna! hosanna!” raised by a thousand voices, “Hosanna to our King!” shook the synagogue like a mighty storm.

When the noise had a little subsided, some of the Scribes and Pharisees reproved Him for not rebuking these cries.

“Who is this that suffereth himself to be hailed as a king?” they said. “This is treason against Cæsar.”

And now Æmilius the Roman knight appeared at the door of the synagogue, attended by six or seven soldiers. No sooner did the eyes of these wicked Jews behold the gleam of his helmet, and his tall plume rising above the heads of the people, than they cried out, as if eager to show reverence

to their conquerors, while they looked at Æmilius to gain his approval—

“We Jews have no king but Cæsar ! Away with the traitor. He who maketh himself king rebels against our most mighty Emperor. Away with him. Arrest him, most noble Roman. Drag him before the Procurator Pilate.”

Æmilius, who well understands these envious Jews, and who is wise in the knowledge of what Jesus teaches, loving Him moreover as a brother, and revering Him as divine—Æmilius remained silent, giving no sign that he would do the will of these wicked enemies of the Prophet. Jesus then said, in a loud voice—

“My kingdom is not of this world. I seek not an earthly throne nor an earthly sceptre. My kingdom is of God. Ye say truly that I am a king,” He added, with indescribable majesty ; “and hereafter ye shall behold me sitting upon the throne of heaven, high and lifted up, when before me every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, of things on earth, and things under the earth.”

When He had thus far spoken, He could not proceed further for the sudden and violent outcry that arose. Some shouted “Hosanna !” others said He blasphemed ; one cried out for the Roman guard, another for the priests, to drive Him from the Temple ; many ran towards Him, to cast themselves at His feet, while others, putting their fingers in their ears, hastened forth from the synagogue, crying, “His blasphemies will cause the house to fall upon us and crush us.”

Never was such an uproar heard. In the midst of it Jesus conveyed Himself away, none knew whither ; and when I returned to the house of Martha, I heard His voice raised in prayer to God in His little chamber. He had sought its holy silence to be alone with His Father in heaven. At times I could hear Him praying and supplicating in tones of the most urgent entreaty ; at others, the silence of His chamber was only broken, at times, by sighs and groans, that seemed to

come from a breaking and crushed heart. Oh, what hand may remove the veil, and reveal what passed there in that holy solitude between the Prophet and His God?

It was late in the day when He came forth, Martha having softly knocked at His door to say that the evening meal was prepared and waited but for Him. When He appeared, His face was colourless, and bore traces of weeping; and though He smiled graciously upon us all, as He was wont to do, there was a quiet sorrow upon His countenance that brought tears to my eyes. Æmilius sat with us at the table, and, with our dear Lazarus and with my uncle Amos, we passed a sacred hour; for the Prophet ate not, but talked with us much and sweetly of the love of God; and as all listened, the viands were forgotten. But, like Him, we all feasted upon the heavenly food, the bread of life, which fell like manna from His sacred lips.

Such, then, my dear father, as you have seen in what I have above related, is the testimony which Jesus publicly bears to Himself, that He is the very Christ who should come into the world. There can be no further doubt of the fact now that He has so plainly stated it, pointing to the prophecies, which He is daily fulfilling by mighty works, in proof of the truth of His words.

Now, to what irresistible conclusion, to what inevitable consequence, doth this lead? Is it not that He *is* THE CHRIST? This result cannot be avoided. Either Jesus is Messias, as He asserts and as His miracles prove, or He is not. Now, if He is not, then is He not a deceiver of the people, as well as a blasphemer of Jehovah? And would the Almighty confer upon an impostor His own attributes, giving Him power to heal, to cast out devils, to command the wind and the sea, to raise the dead—would God do this to one whom He never sent, empowered, nor authorised to be His Christ?

Moreover, the miracles of Jesus, you admit, prove Him to have come from God, while you deny that He is Messias.

Now, if Jesus truly came from God, as, looking at His miraculous power, you readily allow, He cannot be a sinner, and therefore cannot assert concerning Himself what is not true. Yet He asserts that He is the Christ. Then He either did come from God, or there is no truth in Him. But you will not consider as a deceiver a man who heals with a word, who casts out devils, who raises the dead to life, and who proclaims such good precepts, and the necessity of holiness in men if they would enjoy the favour of God. Therefore we must allow that the miraculous power with which Jesus is invested is either derived from God, and that He is, as He says, the true and very Christ of the prophets and patriarchs, or that God has endowed a blasphemer of His name with His own powers, and seconds the deception by continuing these powers to Him in every miracle that He performs. Do not by any cunning device, dearest father, seek to avoid this conclusion. Either Jesus is the Christ, or we make both God and the prophet co-workers in an enormous imposture.

Pardon me, dearest father, if I am too warm and urgent in my efforts to bring you to accept Jesus as the Christ. Convinced as I am that He is Messias, I cannot but ardently desire that you also should come to the knowledge of this truth. What He is yet to be, how He is yet to show forth His majesty and power, is unknown to us all. Some think that He will enter Jerusalem, ere long, attended by tens of thousands of His followers, and that before Him Pilate will peaceably give up his procuratorial chair, and retire with his legions, not only from the Holy City, but from Judæa; that Jesus will ascend the throne of David; that the glory of the age of Solomon will be revived under His rule; and, with the kingdom of Judah for the centre of His power, that He will extend the sceptre of His dominion from sea to sea, and from the river of Egypt and of the East to the ends of the earth, till all nations shall fall down before Him, till emperors and kings sit at His feet, and every tongue and language and

speech in the whole world shall acknowledge Him to be the King of Israel, King of kings and Lord of lords ; while under the splendour of His reign Jerusalem and Judah shall be more powerful than all the cities and kingdoms that have ever been on the earth, and to the dominion and glory of our people there shall be no end.

Such, dear father, is the future of the Prophet, as looked for by all His disciples, save one, and this is John, the betrothed of my cousin Mary. He is more closely bound to Jesus than any of them, and is so beloved by Him that He makes known to him many things which He withholds from the rest. When he hears our views of the coming glory of the Prophet, John's countenance is sad, and he says—

“Not now—not here—not in this world ! The glory of Jesus you will behold, but first He must pass through the valley of darkness, the gate of the tomb. His kingdom is not on the earth, but in the heavens. Here, I fear, He will pass through suffering and sorrow, and endure, perhaps, a painful death ; for He has told me that He came to suffer and die, and that He can only win, bleeding from every vein, the kingdom over which He is hereafter to reign in endless dominion. Prepare your hearts, dear friends,” he would say, “to be rent, and your eyes to weep, rather than fill your minds with pictures of glory, splendour, and power. He has distinctly said to me, ‘I must first suffer many things at the hands of men, before I enter upon my reign of glory. The Jews will seek me that they may kill me, and I shall be taken from among you ; but let not sorrow fill your hearts. Death can have no power over me save such as I permit it to hold. I lay down my life, and I take it again. Through much tribulation and sorrow must the Son of God win the sceptre of this earth from him who hath the power over the nations, even from Satan, the prince of this world. I shall conquer, but I must first suffer. Yet fear not : I make death the gateway to Paradise for you all !’

"Like unto these," says John, "are the mysterious and sorrowful words which He hath often spoken to me. What they mean, or how to understand them, I know not; for I cannot conceive how He who can raise the dead can die, or how He who can calm a tempest can suffer Himself to be taken and slain by men, the tempest of whose wrath He could as easily allay!"

Thus, dear father, do we discourse together of this wonderful Prophet, whose future life is all a mystery, save that, from the prophecies, we know it is to be inconceivably glorious—from His own lips, that it must be inconceivably sorrowful. But whether he sit on a throne, giving laws to the world, or in the dust, borne down by the deepest woe, I shall still love, honour, reverence Him, and trust in Him as my Saviour, my Prince, and the Holy One of God.

Your devoted and loving

ADINA.

LETTER XXIX.

MY DEAREST FATHER,

With what feelings of grief and amazement I begin this letter you can scarce conceive. Jesus, the Prophet of God, is a prisoner to the Roman power! He is accused of making Himself a king, and of conspiring to re-establish the throne of David. And who, think you, have thus accused Him but the Jews, our own—His own people! men who should glory in seeing the dominion of the Cæsars at an end; men who should blush longer to have Mount Zion commanded by a Roman citadel. These base, degraded, and wicked scribes and priests, whom I am ashamed to call my countrymen, have accused the divine Jesus before Pilate of rebellion and

treason! and at this moment, while I write, He is in the ward-room of the Procurator's palace, held a close prisoner.

But for all this I fear not. He cannot be holden of His foes, save by His own free will. With a word he can turn His chains into bands of sand, and by a glance He can render His guards dead men! He will, therefore, escape their bonds. They can have no power over Him. But will not the Lord God punish our nation for this sin and enmity against His Christ? You will ask, my father, why, if He possesses such mighty power, hath He suffered Himself to be taken prisoner? This question I cannot answer. It troubles me. I wonder and am filled with amazement. Every one around me asks the same question. Our house is thronged with His friends, who, though it is midnight, have come hither to hear if the rumour be true. Five of His disciples are with uncle Amos in the court, giving an account of the manner of His arrest, which I will relate to you, although it increases the mystery.

To-day, after eating the Passover with His twelve chosen friends, and instituting a new and peculiar feast with wine and bread, which He told them impressively to hold in remembrance of Him, He went forth towards Olivet; and there seating Himself beneath the shade of a tree, He talked with them very sadly, saying that His hour was come, that He had ended His work, and that He was about to be delivered into the hands of sinful men.

John, upon being questioned by my cousin Mary and myself, gave the following narrative—

"It was evening, and the south side of Olivet lay in deep shadow. We were all sorrowful. We felt each one as if some grievous evil was to come upon us. The tones of our beloved Master's voice moved us to tears quite as much as His words, which were full of mystery. We were all present except Iscariot, who had remained in the city, he being our purse-bearer, to discharge the cost of the Passover supper

and pay for the hire of the room. At that supper Jesus had said very plainly that one of our number would betray Him into the hands of the priests, who, since His triumphant entry into the Holy City, when the multitude ran before Him and followed after Him, shouting hosannas and proclaiming Him Messiah, had diligently sought His life. When we heard our Lord say these strange words in accents of touching reproach, we were all deeply moved; and Peter and the rest at once questioned Him, to know which of them should do this thing. 'Lord, is it I?' asked one; and another, 'Lord, is it I?' I was resting at the moment with my face on the shoulder of Jesus, and said softly—

"'Lord, who is it that betrayeth Thee? I will forthwith lay hands upon him, and prevent his doing Thee harm.'

"Jesus shook His head, and, gently smiling, said—

"'My beloved brother, thou knowest not what thou sayest. The Son of Man must needs be betrayed by His own friends, but woe unto him who betrayeth Him. Mark which of the twelve dippeth bread with me into the dish.'

"I looked, and saw Judas reach forward and dip into the dish at the same instant with Jesus; but in his eagerness, or from the knowledge of guilt, his hand trembled; he spilled the salt over the board, and the sop fell from his grasp into the bowl; upon which Jesus gave him the piece He held, saying to him—

"'Judas, that thou doest, do quickly.'

"We were surprised at the voice and manner in which this was spoken, but supposed the words had reference to Judas's work as bearer of the purse, little suspecting what fearful thing he was to do. Instantly Judas rose from the table, and without a reply, or casting a look at any one of us, went out.

"For a few moments after his footsteps had ceased to be heard there was a heavy silence in the chamber, for a strange fear had fallen upon us, why, we could not tell; and looking

into one another's faces, and then into our dear Master's, we seemed to await some dread event. His face was placid and full of love as He looked upon us. The momentary cloud which shaded His noble brow when He spoke to Judas had all passed off, and there was the serenity of a cloudless sky in His face."

"What was the mysterious feast which He instituted?" asked Mary, interrupting him here.

"Well may you call it mysterious," he answered. "As we were eating the Passover, Jesus took up bread, and, blessing it by a solemn act of consecration, broke it with His hands, and gave a portion to each of us, saying with it—

"'Take, eat; this is my body.'

"Awed and amazed by His manner and by the act, we all received and ate it as He commanded us to do (for who there would disobey his Lord?) as reverently as if it were the holy shewbread of the Temple, dedicated to God's use. When we had eaten in silence what we perceived was the institution of a new and most sacred feast, He took up the cup of wine, and consecrated it also by giving thanks and blessing. The hallowed cup He now offered to each one of us. We all drank of it with deep devotion; for He said to us—

"'I will drink no more with you the fruit of the vine until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.'

"He also said of the wine—

"'This is my blood.'

"And how do you understand these words, that the consecrated bread was His body, and the wine His blood?" I asked of the disciple.

"That is a question I cannot answer," said John. "It is a mystery. But my Lord says it shall be made clear to us hereafter.

"We then sang the Passover hymn to God, and went out at our Lord's command, to go to Olivet. As we went He discoursed with us.

"My children," He said, 'I am with you but a little while longer. The hour of my departure is at hand. Remember my last words—Love one another. In this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.'

"Lord," cried Peter, 'we will go with Thee! Thou shalt not leave us, nor go without us!'

"The priests seek to kill Thee, and Thy footsteps are watched," cried Andrew, earnestly.

"We will not suffer Thee, dear Rabbi, to go abroad alone," said James, zealously: 'our hearts and hands will defend Thee.'

"Whither wilt Thou depart, Lord?" I asked, for I was filled with anxiety. 'Thou wilt not trust Thyself to the Jews!'

"Thus we all, eagerly and tearfully, gathered round Him, troubled and grieved at the words He had spoken. He looked upon us lovingly, and said—

"Little children, I must leave you. Whither I go you cannot come.'

"Though Thou shouldst go to the uttermost parts of the sea, I will follow Thee, my Master and Lord!" cried Peter. 'Whither goest Thou, that we may not follow? I will lay down my life for Thee!'

"With one voice we asserted our devotion to our beloved Master; and secretly I asked Him whither He intended to go, and why He forbade us to go with Him.

"As Abraham bound Isaac his son, and laid him upon the wood, so shall my Father cause me to be bound and laid upon the wood, a sacrifice for the sins of His people.'

"Not so! not so, Lord!" cried Peter. 'I will die for Thee, ere this thing happen to Thee!' And the zealous disciple placed himself by the side of Jesus, as if to defend Him.

"Wilt thou die for me, Peter?" said Jesus, gazing on him with a sad, sweet look. 'Verily, verily, Peter, thou little

knowest what thou sayest. The cock shall not crow twice ere thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.'

"'Deny Thee, Lord!' repeated Peter, with amazement, grief, and horror in his looks.

"'Yea, Peter,' answered Jesus, firmly but kindly, 'thou wilt deny that thou ever knewest me; for the time draweth near when there will be safety only in professing ignorance concerning Jesus the Nazarene. And all ye,' He added, while His voice grew tremulous, and tears glistened in His eyes, 'all ye shall be offended because of me this night: ye shall be ashamed to confess that ye are my disciples, and ye shall think me a deceiver, and be displeased at me. Yea, every one of you shall forsake me; for thus it is written: "The Shepherd shall be smitten, and the sheep shall be scattered!"'

"At hearing these words we knew not what to answer; but I kissed my dear Lord's hand, and said, that if danger were coming upon Him, as it seemed to be, I would share it with Him.

"When He saw that our hearts were troubled, and that we were sad, and that the faithful Philip wept aloud for grief that any should deem he could abandon his Master, He spake further, 'Let not your hearts be troubled; I go to prepare a place for you in my Father's house.'

"'Thy father, Lord, no longer liveth in Nazareth; and, were he alive, there are but two small chambers in his humble house,' said Thomas: 'how sayest Thou that we are all to lodge there?'

"'Thomas, thou canst understand only what thine eyes see. I speak of my Father who is in Heaven. In His house are many mansions.'

"Then, as we drew near Kedron, Jesus began plainly to tell us that He was to die, and that by His death we should be admitted into a heavenly paradise, and live for ever. We could not understand all He said, but we knew that He was

soon to be taken from us; and sorrow filled all our hearts. After discoursing to us in the most touching words, He at length said—

“Come, let us go over Kedron to the side of Olivet, into the garden where we love to walk.”

“We went on with Him, surrounding Him as a guard, to hide Him from the Jewish spies, as well as to defend Him. Peter and James went before. In this way we had passed through the dark streets of the city, and went forth from the gate, which Pilate suffered to be open day and night because of the crowds at the Passover continually coming in and going out. The full moon shone brightly, and as its light glanced on the face of Jesus, beside whom I walked, I saw that it was sadder than its wont, while He spoke but little.

“At length we crossed the brook, and entered the dark groves of Olivet. Well knowing all the paths, we advanced to a central group of venerable olive-trees, beneath which, tradition saith, Abraham used to sit; and there Jesus, turning to us, said in a voice of the deepest woe—

“Friends, the hour of my suffering is come. My work is ended. I would be alone. Remain you here, and watch, for we shall be sought. Come with me, Peter, and come thou also, James. I am going to pray yonder.”

“Take me with Thee also, dear Lord,” I said, sorrowfully.

“Yes, thou art always with me, beloved,” He answered; “I will not leave thee now.”

“So, leaving the eight friends to keep watch against the coming of His enemies, who were known to be seeking Him everywhere, He went to the most hidden parts of the garden. He stopped at the place, near the rock, where Adam is said to have hidden from Jehovah, and He said to us, in a sorrowful tone, ‘Tarry ye here, while I go apart and pray to my Father.’ He went from us about a stone’s cast, and kneeled down where a thick olive-branch, hanging low to the ground, hid Him from our sight. I was so fearful lest He should

leave us, and we should see Him no more, that I soon softly drew near to the spot, and beheld Him kneeling on the ground, while deep groans broke from His heart. I heard His voice murmuring, but could not distinguish the words broken by grief, only the tones were those of anguish and dread.

"As He prayed thus in great agony, I suddenly beheld a light pass by me, as if from the skies; and, lo! an angel stood by the side of Jesus, bending over Him, and raising Him up from the ground. A soft, bright glory shone around the spot; so that Peter, seeing it, came towards me, supposing some one had entered the garden, bearing a torch. I beckoned to Peter to pause, and he gazed with me in speechless wonder and admiration upon the form of the angel, from whose glorious face shone the radiance which illumined the place where Jesus was. As the angel raised Jesus from the ground, we saw that our Lord's divine countenance was convulsed with anguish, and upon His brow stood great shining drops of sweat mingled with blood, which oozed from His pallid temples, and, rolling down His cheeks, dropped to the ground. Never had we beheld a human visage so marred by sorrow, so deeply graven with the lines of agony.

"The angel seemed to speak comforting words, and pointed with his shining hand towards heaven, as if to encourage Him with hope and to give Him strength. The face of Jesus grew more serene. He raised His eyes heavenward with a divine look of holy submission, and cried in a strong voice—

"Not as I will, O God, but as Thou wilt."

"The angel then embraced Him, as if strengthening Him, and soaring upward, disappeared like a star returning into the blue heaven; while Peter and I stood by wondering and full of awe at what we beheld."

"How looked the angel?" I asked of John, interrupting him in his report.

"As a noble youth, with a countenance so dazzling I could

not look upon him steadily. He seemed to be clothed in flowing raiment, silvery white; and a fragrance more delicate and grateful than that of the most precious perfumes of India was diffused by his presence throughout the garden, while the sound of his voice seemed to fill all the air with strange music, unlike aught that may be heard on earth."

"Had the angel wings?" asked Mary.

"Nay, I could not well discern," answered John. "His robes seemed to shape themselves into wings, as he rose from the earth; and when he stood they flowed with living grace about his godlike form. After the departure of the angel, Jesus seemed calmer, and as we did not wish to trouble His sacred meditations, we softly returned to where James lay asleep. We remained for some time conversing together upon the wonderful vision we had seen, which confirmed us in the belief that Jesus came from God, and was in truth the Messiah that should come; but at length, wearied with the labours of the day, we must have fallen asleep, for we were suddenly awakened by the voice of our dear Master saying—

"‘Why sleep ye, my children?—But the hour is past for watching. Ye may sleep on now, for though your flesh is weak, your spirit is willing. I need your aid no more.’

"But we refused to sleep longer. We then advanced to where the other disciples were, and found them also asleep.

"‘Arise, let us go hence!’ cried Jesus, in a tone that roused them from their slumber; ‘lo, they are at hand who seek me.’

"While He was speaking, we saw many torches gleaming through the trees, along King David’s walk, and the tramp of footsteps fell on our ears. We soon saw a large party advancing into the midst of the garden; they walked rapidly, and spoke only in undertones. We at once took the alarm, and said to Jesus—

"‘Fly, dear Master. Let us ascend the hill, and escape by the way to Bethany, for these are enemies.’

"'Nay,' answered our Master, 'I must submit to my Father's will. It must needs be that I deliver myself into the hands of these men; how else shall the Scriptures be fulfilled? Seek safety for yourselves in flight; but I must go whither they will lead me.'

"'Not so, Lord,' said Peter. 'There is time for Thee to escape; or if not, we will stand by Thee and defend Thee.'

"So said all the disciples. Jesus shook His head, and said, with a mournful smile—

"'Ye know not what ye say or would do. My hour is come.'

"While He yet spake, the multitude drew near, and those who came foremost, raising their torches high above their heads, discovered us, with Jesus in the midst. To my surprise, I beheld Judas acting as their guide; for he alone knew where his Master was to be found at that hour. When he perceived Jesus, this wicked man ran forward, with the eagerness of friendship in his face, and kissed Jesus on the cheek, saying—

"'Hail, Master! I am glad I have found Thee.'

"'Judas,' said Jesus, 'betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?'

"When Judas heard this he turned to the multitude, at the head of which I now discovered some of the chief priests and of the most learned Scribes of the Temple, and cried aloud—

"'This is He! Seize Him, and hold Him fast.'

"Thereupon the crowd, to the number of full tenscore men, among whom were the vilest sort of people, ran forward to lay hands upon Jesus; the moon and torches together shedding almost the bright light of day into the garden upon the whole group.

"On seeing them advance so furiously, with spears, and clubs, and swords, Peter and James placed themselves before Jesus, to defend Him; while I, being unarmed, cast myself across His breast, to shield His life with my body. The

bolder men in the crowd coming too near, Peter smote one of them with his sword, as he was reaching out his arm to grasp Jesus by the shoulder, and clave off his ear. On seeing this the crowd uttered a fierce shout, and began pressing upon us; but Jesus raised the palm of His hand, and said, quietly—

“‘Whom seek ye?’

“Instantly the whole mass rolled backward, like a receding billow flung back against the face of an immovable rock, and every man fell with his forehead to the ground, where they all lay for a while stunned. We twelve alone stood; for Judas had not been struck down, and now remained gazing with amazement and terror upon the prostrate enemies of Jesus.

“‘O Lord!’ cried Peter, astonished, ‘if thou canst thus repel thy foes, thou needest not to fear them. Shall I smite Judas also?’

“‘Nay, put up thy sword, Peter. Let him remain to witness my power, that he may know that neither he nor his have any power over me save that I give them.’

“While He was thus speaking, the people and soldiers rose to their feet: instead of flying, they seemed to be infuriated at their discomfiture; and the chief priests, crying out that it was by sorcery they had been thus stricken down, rushed madly forward, and laid their hands upon Jesus and upon us all. In vain I strove against numbers to rescue Jesus; we were driven from the garden, leaving Jesus in the hands of His enemies.”

When John had told us thus much, dear father, our tears and his were mingled. We wondered that Jesus, who could, as He had shown, destroy His enemies by the waving of His hand, should suffer them to make Him their prisoner, for in their hands He knew He must die. This amazes and confounds us. At one moment we are tempted to lose our confidence in Him, and believe, as many now begin to say, that

we have been following a deceiver; and in the next to trust fully in Him, and to believe that He will yet overcome His enemies and be restored to us. Every step we hear at the door makes our hearts bound, for we think it may be that of our beloved Lord escaped from the hands of His captors. We must wait for the end with hope and faith. To-morrow will, perhaps, reveal all. The mystery that more and more closely surrounds this great Prophet is inscrutable. The seeming contradictions that are found in His prophetic character trouble us; but we try to comfort ourselves with the word of His promise:—

“Ye know not now, but ye shall know hereafter, and shall believe truly that I came out from God. What now seems to you mysterious shall be clear as light. Wait and have faith, and all shall be made known which now you understand not. Let no trials and sufferings through which you see me pass cause your faith to fail. I am come into this world to conquer; but it is expedient first that I humble myself. If I stoop, it is to raise up the world with me when I rise again.”

Ah! it is stooping indeed, that this Prince of the Prophets should suffer Himself to be led away, bound, by His foes! But we hope with trembling, dear father, trustfully remembering His words.

I have omitted to mention to you what John further related, as wonderful, touching the arrest of the Prophet.

“As the chief priests laid their hands on Him and bound Him,” he said, “there was heard in the air the sound of myriads of rushing wings, and a voice like the gathering signal of a trumpet echoing and re-echoing in the skies, as if a countless host of invisible beings were being assembled, armies by armies, in mid heaven. At these fearful and wondrous sounds all raised their heads, but could behold nothing. Then Jesus said, with a majestic and commanding look, such as I never before beheld upon His face—

"Ye hear, O men of Israel, that I am not without heavenly friends ! If I pray my Father which is in heaven, He will give me twelve legions of His angels, now hovering in the air and yearning to defend me from my foes, to aid me ! But I may not use my power for myself. I came on earth to suffer. As man, I must submit to all things that come upon me, nor make use of means in my own behalf that a man may not command. For this I came into the world. Lead on ! I go with you."

Thus, dear father, was Jesus borne away by a fierce multitude, and dragged into the city, followed by a shouting and insulting crowd, who, seeing that, notwithstanding His miraculous power, they could so easily secure and hold Him, mocked Him only the more ; for they could not understand how He possessed powers which could not be exercised to prevent His own capture. Some of them even reviled Him on the way, and scornfully asked Him to call down His twelve legions of angels ; while others pretended they were hungry and thirsty, and would have Him turn water into wine for them, and to give them bread by another miracle of loaves.

John, whose ardent love and affection for Jesus led him to follow them, heard all this ; but Jesus made no answer, only walking quietly with them, patiently enduring all they said and did.

As they entered the city gate, the Roman guard, seeing the crowd and uproar, stopped the throng, to learn the cause of the commotion.

"We have here a traitor and conspirator, O captain of the guard," answered Eli, the chief priest ; 'a pestilent fellow who calls himself Christ, a king. We have, therefore, with this band of hired soldiers, taken him, as he was found, with twelve of his fellow-conspirators, secretly plotting to overthrow the government of Cæsar, and to make himself king of Judæa.'

"'Long live Cæsar ! Long live the Emperor !' shouted the Roman soldiers. 'We have no king but Cæsar !'

"Upon this, many of the soldiers cried, 'Take him before the Procurator ! He will reward him according to his works. To Pilate ! to Pilate !'

"'To Annas !' shouted the Jews. 'First to Annas !'

"Then, while some shouted for one thing, and some for another, and with vast numbers of those who had come up to the Passover pressing to get a sight of the Prophet, He was hurried towards the house of Annas, who is the best beloved man among our people, and whose power over them is unbounded. When, with a great uproar of voices and the glare of many torches, they reached the dwelling of the High Priest's son-in-law, they called him to the roof of the house, upon which he appeared in his night apparel, for it was by this time past the hour of midnight.

"When Annas knew that the prisoner was Jesus, he uttered a fearful oath expressive of his joy and triumph, and hastily robing himself and coming down into the court, he bade them bring the prisoner in. But the calm majesty of Jesus abashed him, and hindered the insulting questions he began putting to Him. At length, finding that the Prophet would make him no reply, he caused Him to be bound still more closely with cords, lest He should, like Samson, rend His bonds and escape on the way ; and he sent Him to Caiaphas the High Priest, saying to Him—

"'Caiaphas will make thee to answer, O prophet ; thou that wouldst destroy the Temple, and callest thyself the Son of the Lord Jehovah. Out, blasphemer ! Away with him, or the house will be swallowed up that covereth one so impious. Away with the man ! By the crown of David ! Pilate will make thee a king in truth, and give thee a Roman throne, to which, that thou mayest not presently fall from it, he will nail thee foot and hand !'

"At this the cruel crowd shouted their approbation, and

many cried, 'Ay! to the cross! to the cross with him!' But others said, 'To Caiaphas!' The captain of the Roman soldiers resolved that He should be taken before Pilate, and therefore led the way forth, Jesus being brought bound in the midst."

With renewed uproar, they tumultuously pressed forward, their way lighted by the red glare of a hundred torches. John followed; but being recognised as one of Jesus' disciples by a soldier in Æmilius's legion, he was seized, and only escaped capture by leaving his apparel in the grasp of the rude Roman; for such was the prevalent hatred to Jesus that His enemies threateningly called for His followers, and would have taken them also had it been in their power. Five of the disciples who have escaped are now in this house, whither John fled also, on eluding the grasp of the soldier, leaving his linen garment in his hand. Our hearts are troubled within us. To move in favour of Jesus is only to share His fate, and do Him no service; moreover, I am pained to say, two or three of His disciples begin to doubt whether He is the Messiah, since, instead of establishing His promised kingdom, He is now held a prisoner, and even threatened with death.

Yet, in all this tribulation, dear father, I still trust in Him and hope. I cannot doubt His truth and power. I have seen Him raise up Lazarus from the grave, and I will not believe but that He can save Himself, and will save Himself from their hands. It is only when I shall behold Him really lifeless—when I see Him really dead, that my faith in His divine mission will waver. If He should be slain, then, alas! not only will perish for ever all my hopes, and those of His trembling, weeping disciples, but the hopes of the restoration and glory of Judah will be destroyed also; for verily we have believed that it is He who should deliver Israel. With eyes blinded with tears, I can scarcely subscribe myself,

Your mourning but loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXX.

MY DEAR FATHER,

I know not how to write—I know not what to say. Dismay and sorrow fill my heart. I feel as if life were a burden too heavy to bear. Disappointment and anguish are all that remain to me. He in whom I trusted—He whom thousands in Judah had begun to look upon as the Hope of the nation—He who, as His disciples trusted, would have redeemed Israel—Jesus has been delivered this morning, by the Roman Procurator, to be condemned to death, AND THEY HAVE CRUCIFIED HIM !

Tears of grief unutterable fall upon the parchment as I write, and plainer than any words tell you how I am smitten by this heavy blow. Jesus, the noble, mild, courteous, and wise Prophet, who taught with such grace and wisdom, and whom we believed to be one sent from God to be the Saviour of our people—the Prince who should sit on the throne of David and restore the former splendour of our nation—IS DEAD ! With Him, alas ! have perished all our hopes. When He bowed His bleeding head on the cross, the necks of weeping Judah bent once more to the dust, to bear the yoke of Rome, from which they believed He would have delivered them. With Him has been quenched the rising light of the sun of the Messias, for we hoped and believed He was the Christ. But WE HOPE NO MORE ! The daughters of Israel may now sit in the dust and cover themselves with the garments of woe, for He in whom they trusted is dead. Amazed and dismayed, His followers wander in the fields, or hide themselves from the multitude who seek their lives. Alas ! I cannot refrain from weeping bitter tears. How hath the Lord

covered the daughters of Zion with a cloud in His anger, and cast down from heaven unto earth the beauty of Israel! "All they that pass by," as saith the prophet, "will clap their hands at us who trusted in Him, and wag their heads at the daughters of Jerusalem: Is this the man, the mighty Prophet whom men called the Son of the Highest, the Messias of God, the Prince of David, the excellency of wisdom, and the joy of the earth? The punishment of thine iniquity is accomplished, O daughter of Zion."

Thus do I weep, and thus do I complain; for verily, fear and a snare are come upon us; desolation and destruction are around us, O my father! We know not which way to turn. He in whom we trusted has proved as one of ourselves, weak and impotent, and has suffered death without power to save Himself. He that saved others could not escape the death of the cross. While I write, I hear the priest Abner, in the court below, mocking my uncle Amos in a loud voice, and saying—

"Your Messias is dead. A great and mighty prophet, in sooth, was he whom you Nazarenes have chosen—born in a manger, and crucified as a thief! Said I not that he who could prophesy against the Temple and the priesthood was of Beelzebub?"

Rabbi Amos makes no reply. Shame and despair seal his lips. Thus our enemies triumph over us, and we answer only with confusion and silence. All those who two days ago were so full of hope, and proud to sit at the feet of Jesus, or to follow Him whithersoever He went, now fear to confess that they have ever known or seen Him. It is only the high rank as a priest of my uncle Amos which protects him or his household from insult.

But, my dear father, thou to whom I have ever confided all my hopes and fears, shall we pronounce Jesus a deceiver? Oh, can He whose very countenance was full of heavenly truth, whose lips taught lessons such as the wisest philoso-

phers and holiest prophets have loved to study and to teach, whose whole life has been blameless, and who has lived only to do good—can He, must He be pronounced a deceiver? When I think of the sick He has cured, the indigent He has relieved, the mourners He has comforted, the ignorant He has enlightened, the dead He has upraised; when I remember the sublime truths He has taught, His love of God, His respect for the worship of the Temple, the perfect purity of His daily life, the sincerity of all He said, and the universal sympathy which seemed to fill His bosom for all who were in sorrow, I cannot, oh! I cannot bring my pen to write the word "deceiver" together with His name. But what shall I write? Alas! I am desolate and miserable, like those who, confiding all their heart's treasures to another's keeping, whom they believed good and true, find that he was unworthy of confidence and betrayed their trust. Jesus declared that He came on earth to establish a kingdom, and sit on the throne of David, and that all nations through Him would receive their laws from Jerusalem. Where, now, is His power? Where His throne? Where are His laws? His power hath ended in death! His throne is the Roman cross, reared between two thieves; and the Roman laws, or rather the Roman power, which He was to destroy, hath slain Him.

This unhappy, this unlooked-for result, has amazed me; and not only me, but all who have been so led by His winning power as to trust in Him. Even John, the beloved disciple, I hear now walking to and fro in the adjoining room, weeping as if his noble heart would burst. From time to time, I catch my cousin Mary's sweet voice trying to soothe him, although she is stricken, like us all, to the very earth; for she trusted in Jesus, if possible, with greater faith than mine; and very great, therefore, is her dismay at His death, at the sudden termination of all her hopes in Him, and of His restoration of Israel. We have wept to-night till we have no

more tears to shed ; and I have left her to take my pen and pour out my griefs to you. The unhappy John I hear despairingly answer her—

“Seek not to comfort me, Mary. There is no more ground for hope. He is *dead*—*DEAD* ! All is lost. To us who trusted in Him there remaineth but to fly into Galilee, if we would save our wretched lives, and to return once more to our nets. The sun which shone so bright has proved a phantom-light, and gone down in darkness. Him whom I could not but love, I see that I loved too well, since He is not what I believed Him to be. Oh, how could He be so like the Son of God, and yet not be He ? Yet I loved and adored Him as if He were the very Son of the Highest. But I have seen Him die as a man—I have gazed on His lifeless body. I have beheld the deep wound made in His very heart by the Roman spear. I cast myself upon Him when He was taken down from the cross, and implored Him by His love for me to give some sign that He was not held in the bonds of death. I placed my trembling hands over His heart. It was motionless as stone, like any other dead man’s. The flesh of His corpse was cold and clammy. He was dead—dead ! With Him die all our hopes—the hopes of Israel.”

“He may live again,” said Mary, softly and doubtfully, as if she herself had no such hope. “He raised Lazarus, thou dost remember.”

“Yes, but Jesus was living when He did it,” answered John ; “but how can the dead raise the dead ? No, He will never move, speak, nor breathe again.”

Thus, dear father, are we left to mourn with shame at our delusion, and to weep over utterly ruined hopes. I candidly acknowledge that I have been too hasty to confess Jesus as *Messias* of God ; but, oh ! how could I but believe in one who seemed so like an angel from heaven—a Prince of Light ? There is a dreadful and deep mystery in all this. To the last we believed He would set Himself free, and escape death.

Alas ! for our sins God has suffered this great anguish to come upon us all.

I try to find some consolation in the remembrance of all that He was—how good and holy ; but this thought only darkens the cloud of the present ; for I think, how could He, who was so good, be so great a deceiver ? I live and breathe, while He, who taught me that He had life in Himself, and who could, I believed, raise me from the dead if I died, He is Himself now dead and laid in the tomb ; and yet I live ! He, over whom we fondly believed Death could have no power, since the doors of sepulchres opened at His voice and sent forth their tenants alive, has been conquered by Death, and proved Himself only the mortal son of Joseph and of the widowed Mary. She is inconsolable. Her distress is heartrending to witness. Not only has she lost her only son, about whom all her motherly love was entwined, as the vine encircles the lofty palm, but she seems bowed down in the very ashes of shame that He has died leaving thousands who trusted in His word, fugitives for His name's sake, and deceived in all they expected from Him. Even now I hear her heavy sighs from the couch where she lies broken-hearted in my aunt's chamber, whither John led her after the execution of Jesus, at the request of her dying son. She asks to be left alone, and I forget my own sorrows when I think upon hers, which are greater than she can bear ; for all at once her son has been hurled from the position in which He drew all eyes upon Him, and has died an ignominious death, leaving behind Him the name of an impostor. This pierces her heart more keenly than that she has been made childless.

"Oh," I heard her say to Rabbi Amos, when she came into the house, "oh, could He have deceived me thus—He whom I believed to be the soul of truth ? Alas ! my son, my son ! better hadst thou remained in Thy humble shop, leading a lowly and useful life, than, for the fleeting glory of a prophet's name, to hold out hopes and promises to Thy followers that

Thou couldst never realise, and meet with such a death. This has made my heart bleed, indeed. My grey hairs will go down to the grave with shame that I am the mother of Him who has misled Israel. Yet I hoped great things of Him, more than of all the sons of men."

But I will not dwell on this universal sorrow—sorrow mingled with shame—for the pride of all has been humbled to the dust. I will give you an account, dear father, of what occurred after the taking of Jesus; for I wish you to know all concerning Him, that you may see how perfectly, to the last, He sustained the lofty character which drew all men after Him, standing before His judges like a man sublime in the consciousness of innocence, and gaining the respect and admiration even of His foes. Oh, how could He have been a deceiver? Yet He is dead, and in that He is dead, has He not failed in all the glorious things which He promised concerning Himself? "His death," says His disciple Peter, who was here to-night to ask John what should now be done, "His death buries all our hopes for ever."

But I will not further delay the account of His trial and condemnation, for you will be earnest to know how such a man could be doomed to a malefactor's death. In my last letter I spoke of His arrest through the treachery of Judas. Led by His captors, bound by the wrists with a cord, He was taken from the dark groves of Olivet, wherein He had been found praying, and conducted with great noise into the city by Cæsar's Gate. It is near this archway that Rabbi Amos lives. It was the third hour of the night, and I had just gone to my chamber, which overlooks the Street of the Kings, when the night's stillness was broken by the sudden outcries of fierce men. Then I heard the quick questionings of the Roman sentinels, the galloping of several horsemen, and a confused tumult, the cries of which increased continually. But I will transcribe for you my cousin Mary's account of it, just written by her to Martha of Bethany.

"I went out upon the terrace which overlooks the street," says Mary in her letter, "and beheld a multitude advancing with torches flashing; and they quickly came opposite the house, at least two hundred men in number, half clad and savage, with flashing eyes and scowling looks. Here and there among them was a Levite, urging them on; and I also beheld Abner the priest, kindling their wrath by loud oratory and eager gestures. Behind rode five Roman horsemen, with levelled spears, guarding a young man who walked in front of their horses. It was Jesus! His locks were dishevelled, His beard was torn, His face appeared marred, and His garments rent. He was pale and in pain, yet walked with a firm step. I broke forth into tears, and so did Adina, who had come out to learn the cause of the tumult. He looked up, and said, meekly—

"'Weep not for me.'

"He would have said more, but the priest smote Him rudely upon the mouth; and the crowd, following the priest's example, would have done Him further insult, but for the Roman soldiers, who turned their spears every way to guard Him from violence; for by their centurion's orders they had rescued Him from the terrible rage of the Jews, and were commanded to bring Him safely before Pilate. Thus guarded by Roman soldiers, and escorted by the men who thirsted for His blood, he was led onward to the Prætorium, where the Roman Procurator dwelt. Gradually the whole multitude, horsemen, Jews, priests, torch-bearers, and unresisting captive, disappeared in the distance, and then came silence, a dread and unearthly silence. I turned and looked in Adina's face. She was leaning, colourless as marble, against one of the columns.

"'What can all this mean?' she said, full of fear. 'Can it be possible He has suffered Himself to be taken—He who could destroy or make alive with a word? What means this dreadful tumult we have but now beheld?'

"I could not answer. It was to me a mystery and a snare. All I knew was what my eyes had just beheld, that Jesus, our Prophet, our King, our Messiah, on whom rested all our hopes and the joy of Israel, had been dragged a prisoner through the streets, helpless and without a friend. I trembled with forebodings of I knew not what. Suddenly Adina cried out—

"He cannot be harmed ! He cannot die ! He is a mighty Prophet, and has power that will strike His enemies dead ! Let us not fear. He has yielded Himself up, only the more terribly to defeat and destroy His foes. We will not fear what Pilate or the priests can do. They cannot harm the anointed Shiloh of the Lord.'

"While we were yet talking, dearest Martha, a dark figure passed stealthily along in the street beneath, and seemed to court the shadow of the houses. My father, Rabbi Amos, opened the outer gate, with a torch in his hand, to follow, at our request, the crowd of people, and see what should befall Jesus. The light glared full upon the tall, spare form of Peter, the fisherman of Galilee. His dark, stern features wore a look of anxious fear.

"Is it thou, Peter ?' cried my father. 'What meaneth all this ? Who has ordered the arrest of Jesus ? What has He done ?'

"That hateful and envious man, Caiaphas, seeks to destroy Him, and with large gifts of gold has bribed the baser Jews to do this thing. Come with me, Rabbi, and let us die with Him !' And the Galilean pressed eagerly forward, so swiftly that my father could not keep up with him.

"And this was an hour ago, and yet no news has come from the Prætorium ; but from time to time a dreadful shout from the hill on which the palace of Caiaphas stands comes to my ears, and the glare of torches illumines the sky high above the towers of the palace. It is a fearful night of agony and doubt. Adina, in her painful uncertainty, but for my

entreaties, would go forth alone towards the Prætorium, to hear and know all. I can keep myself calm only by writing to you. Adina has also begun a letter to her father, recording these sad things, but she drops her pen to start to the balcony at every sound. When will this fearful night end? What will the morrow reveal? Adina is confident that nothing can befall the holy Prophet, declaring that He who could raise your brother Lazarus from the dead cannot fear death. Moreover, has He not told us that He has come from God to be King of Israel? If he enter the Prætorium a bound captive to-night, it will be to sit upon the Roman throne within it to-morrow, with Pilate in chains at His feet. I write this, to send to you by Elec at dawn, that you and Lazarus may hasten to come to us into the city.

"It is an hour since I wrote the last line. The interval has been one of anguish. Tidings have been brought us that the priests insist on Pilate's passing sentence of death on the Prophet. The cries 'Crucify him! crucify him!' have distinctly reached our ears. John is now here. About half an hour after Jesus passed he reached our house, almost destitute of apparel, his garments having been torn off from him by the Jews, who endeavoured to make him prisoner also. He is calm and confident, saying that his beloved Master can never be injured by any man, and that He will, ere many hours are gone, deliver Himself from His foes, and proclaim Himself King of Israel, with power such as man never had. May the God of Jacob defend Him! John has just gone up to the Temple, in the disguise of a priest, to get news: he weareth my father's robes. I tremble lest he be discovered and taken; for the Jews are as bitter against the disciples as against their Master.

"I have even now seen a messenger passing in great haste along the street, and his horse falling, cast him to the earth almost upon our threshold. It was the page of Æmilius, the noble Roman knight who is betrothed to my cousin

Adina. She hastened to his aid. He was but stunned, and soon was able to tell us that he bore a message from Lucia Metella, the fair and youthful bride of Pilate, urging the Procurator to have nothing to do with Jesus, but give Him His liberty ; for she had just awakened from a dream, wherein she saw Him sitting on the throne of the universe, crowned with the stars of heaven, the earth as a footstool beneath His feet, and all the nations assembled and doing Him homage, while kings cast their glittering crowns and sceptres at His feet, and hailed Him as God !

"Such was the account given by the page to Adina ; then, remounting his horse, he set forth rapidly on his way towards the Prætorium. This report of the page has filled our hearts with joy and hope inexpressible. Confident that Jesus is the Son of God, we will not fear what man can do unto Him.

"It is now three hours past midnight, and the dawn is comfortless and cold, so that I cannot longer hold my pen. I shall send this so soon as the city gates are opened. Come at once to comfort us ; for this is no time that the friends of Jesus should be out of the city.

"It is day. My father has returned, and says that nothing can save Jesus but the Prophet's own divine power. The Jews are in number many thousands, and cry for His blood. Pilate has but a cohort of soldiers, and fears to use force, lest the angry people break into open revolt, and take the city from his hands, which they can do with ease if they will unite. 'He hesitates,' said my father, 'between fear of condemning an innocent man, and dread of the vengeance of the Jews if he let Him go. Nothing can save the Prophet but His own mighty miracle-working power. He who has saved others will surely save Himself.'

"While my father was speaking, a man rushed into our presence. He was low in stature, broad-chested, with a stiff reddish beard, narrow eyes, and sharp, cunning face. His attire was ragged and mean, as was his whole aspect. He

grasped in his right hand a small bag which rang with coin as his shaking hand held it. He trembled all over, and seizing my father by the arm with the quick, strong grasp of one possessed, cried hoarsely—

“‘Will He let them? will He? will He?’

“‘Will He let them do what, Iscariot? Of whom speakest thou? Art thou crazed? Thou shouldst well be, after thy deed of to-night.’

“‘Will He let them kill Him? Will He die? will He die? Think you He will escape? He can if He will! Cords to Him are as ropes of sand!’

“‘No, no—He is bound hand and foot,’ answered my father, sadly. ‘He makes no defence! I fear He will let them do as they list with Him. He makes no effort to save His life.’

“At this, Judas, for it was that wicked man, beat his forehead and his breast in a frenzied manner with the bag of silver, and, with a look of horrible despair, rushed forth, crying as he went—

“‘I will save Him! The priests shall have their money again! He shall not die! But that I believed He would do some miracle to escape them, I never would have sold Him. I hoped to get their money, and trusted, if they bound Him that He would escape by His own power. I did not dream that He would not exert it to save Himself. I will save Thee, innocent man of God! for I alone am guilty, and not Thou. Oh! if I had but foreseen this! But He shall *not* die.’

“Raving thus, he disappeared towards the Prætorium, leaving us all amazed at what we had heard.

“‘Verily,’ said my father, ‘I understand it now. Judas hoped to gain the money and cheat the chief priests, trusting to the Prophet’s divine power to save Himself out of their hands. Behold the power of conscience! He is now beside himself with horror and remorse, for he well knows that

He whom he has betrayed is a man of God without sin or guile.'

"The sun is up. The fate of Jesus is sealed! The Procurator has signed the sentence of death, and He is to be crucified to-day. But I believe, like Judas, that He cannot die, and that He will signalise the hour by some wonderful miracle of mighty power. Thus tremblingly we hope and wait."

Here, my dear father, terminates what my cousin Mary has written to Martha and Lazarus, and as it is a very minute account, please to receive it as if written by myself, for during the night I was in too great fear to write faithfully as she has done. But now that all is over—now that Jesus lies dead in the tomb and for ever at rest—I have been able sorrowfully to continue my tale.

In my next letter I will give you an account of His trial, as it was related to me by my uncle Amos and by John, one of whom was present to the last. This evening I am going to see the sepulchre where they have laid Him; for, though He has in His death so sorely crushed all our hopes in Him, and proved that He was not what we believed Him to be, yet my heart and my love hover about His memory, and draw my footsteps towards His resting-place. Though we are deceived, I cannot reproach His memory. Oh, no, I cannot!—but I dare not trust myself to say all that I feel. I only wish I could forget Him for evermore, and I regret that I have ever striven to convince you that He was the Shiloh of the prophets. Yet never man spake like this man, my dear father! and if Shiloh in truth come, can He do greater works than this man hath done? In all things He was the Son of God save in His death. This event overthrows alike all our hopes and our faith in Him as the Christ.

Your sorrowing and loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXXI.

DEAREST FATHER,

I have but now ended my last letter, and I am already beginning another ; for only in writing to you do I find relief from the deep affliction which has bowed me to the earth. If anything can add to my sorrow at the death of Jesus the Nazarene, it is that I have endeavoured so earnestly to make you believe in Him also. Forgive me, my dear father : your wisdom, your knowledge of the prophets, your judgment, were far above my own. But who could have believed that He was less than He claimed to be—the very Son and Messiah of God ? Oh ! I shall never have faith in a human being again ; and the more lovely, the more holy, the more heavenly the character of any man, the wiser and purer his teachings, the more distrustful shall I be of them. In the grave with Jesus is buried, henceforth and for ever, all my trust in human virtue, even when accompanied by amazing miracles. I perceive that a man may teach divine truths, nay, may wear in his countenance the very impress of an angel, may heal the sick by a touch, walk on the sea, raise the dead, and cast out devils, and yet prove in the end a deceiver. Alas for human truth ! Alas for poor Israel, which has thus been blinded ! They have beheld their beloved Shiloh nailed to a Gentile cross, without power to save Himself from this shameful death.

But I will turn from these painful thoughts, and, as I promised in my last letter, will give you an account of what was done at His trial, as you will be desirous to know on what accusation His condemnation was founded.

It is now the morning after His crucifixion, and I am calmer than I was yesterday, and shall be able to write more plainly.

A day hath passed away since He was nailed to the cross. His followers have been, since His arrest, hunted like wild beasts of the wilderness. Annas has hired fierce Roman soldiers, filled them with wine, and sent them everywhere to seize the fugitive Nazarenes. John was especially sought out, and the emissaries of Annas came at midnight yesterday to the house to take him; but we aided him to escape by means of the subterranean passage that leads from the dwelling of Rabbi Amos to the catacombs beneath the Temple. Mary of Nazareth, the mother of Jesus, accompanied him, and they went forth in safety out of the city, and are now at Bethany with Martha—whence they will go to John's new home near Genesareth. Even Lazarus, whom Jesus raised, has been made a prisoner, but was released by the power of Æmilius, the Roman knight, who has conducted him hither, where he now remains in safety; and Æmilius has also placed a guard about our house, for fear of further violence from the Jews. I, therefore, can write to you undisturbed. Æmilius is the only one who, since Jesus died, has any faith left in his promises. He asserts that Jesus plainly foretold His own death, and also that if He died He would rise again. Peter also recollects that Jesus spoke this word; but my uncle Amos has no confidence, and says—

“It is easy for any man to foretell that he will die, and quite as easy for him to say that he will rise again. But let us see Jesus rise again, and we will believe in Him indeed.”

Æmilius, however, though but recently a convert from the paganism of Rome, is firm in his faith that He will rise again to life; and, instead of giving up all, as we do, says that he would not be amazed to be suddenly told by the soldiers whom he left to guard His tomb, that Jesus had come forth alive from the dead. The confidence of Æmilius has almost inspired me once more with hope. But, dear father, I saw

His pierced side, I marked the torrent of blood and water flow forth from the crimson wound, and saw His lifeless head hang down upon His breast. If He had not been pierced through, I might have hoped that He could yet revive; but that He was pierced removes all hope that He can be restored. He did not swoon, and thus *appear* like one dead, or we might trust He might be restored; but He was slain, and I saw Him lie a mangled corpse at the foot of the cross, bleeding from five wounds, one of which was through His heart. I should rejoice to have the faith of my beloved Æmilius; but I answer him that I have hitherto believed too well, and that when Jesus expired, all faith in my bosom expired with Him.

But I have forgotten that I am to narrate to you, dear father, the manner of His accusation, trial, and condemnation. As I was not present in the Prætorium, I have learned the further account which I shall give, in part from John and in part from Rabbi Amos, who were both there a portion of the night; Peter, and other disciples, as well as Æmilius, have also given me additional facts. What these told me I will tell, at the risk of repetition, for some of them heard and saw what John did not.

"So soon as the mob of Jews who had laid hands on Jesus, and whom I saw pass the house, came to the abode of Rabbi Annas, he asked them whom they had as a prisoner; and when they answered that it was the Nazarene Prophet, he said, with great joy—

"Bring him into the lower court, that I may see him. By the rod of Aaron! I would have him do some notable miracle for me."

"And thus speaking, the white-headed old man hastened, as I have said, down to the court, which, on reaching, he found thronged with the infuriated multitude, mingled with the Roman soldiers. Scarce could he make for himself a passage to where Jesus stood, both imprisoned and de-

fended by a glittering lattice of Roman spears. After looking upon Him steadfastly, he said, with curiosity, yet with scorn—

“Art thou, then, the King of the Jews? Hast thou come to reign on the throne of David? Show me a sign from heaven, and I will acknowledge thee, O Nazarene.”

“But Jesus stood calm and silent, making him no answer. Annas then angrily plucked Him by the beard; and presently a messenger arrived, to say to him that Caiaphas, the High Priest, who had married the beautiful and haughty Miriam, the daughter of Annas, demanded to have Jesus brought before him. Upon this, Annas said, in a loud voice—

“Lead him to the palace. Caiaphas, my son-in-law, would fain see the man who can destroy the Temple, and rebuild it in three days.”

“There now arose a dreadful shout from the priests and people, who, rushing upon Jesus, cried, ‘Crucify him!’ and attempted to tear Him from the soldiers who were guarding Him along the streets; but in protecting Him, as they had been commanded to do, the Romans wounded several Jews. Hereupon there was a great cry of sedition, and many shouted—

“Down with the Roman eagles! Down with the barbarians! Death to the Gentiles!”

“These cries were followed up by a fearful rush of the mass of men upon the few guards, who were forced back, their spears broken like straws, or turned aside; and Jesus was torn violently from their power. But in the height of the battle, Æmilius, who had heard the tumult from the castle, appeared with a portion of the legion of which he was prefect, and instantly charging the people, who fled before the advance of his horses, rescued the Prophet, but not without causing the death of one of the foremost of the mob.

“‘Rabbi,’ said Æmilius to the Prophet, with compas-

sionate respect, 'I know Thou hast power from God to scatter as chaff this rabble of fiends ; speak, and let them perish at Thy divine command.'

"'Nay, my son ; I am come into the world for this hour,' answered Jesus. 'This also is a part of my mission from my Father. It becomes me to endure all things, even death.'

"'Thou canst not die, O Lord,' said Æmilius, eagerly. 'Did I not see Thee raise Lazarus from the tomb ?'

"'It was to die that I came into this world ; but not for myself. I lay down my life, and I can take it again. These men could have no power over me except my Father granted it to them ; and what my Father willeth I will also. Seek not, my son, to deliver me. This day was foreseen by Esaias, who wrote of me. I must fulfil the prophets. There remains only that I be delivered to judgment and to death.'

"These words were spoken by them beneath the portico, as Æmilius was loosening the sharp cords from the bleeding wrists of the youthful Prophet.

"'To Caiaphas ! to Caiaphas !' now cried the multitude, who had been for a moment awed by the resolute advance of the Roman horse, but now grew bolder, as some men removed the dead and wounded out of sight. 'To the palace with the blasphemer !' they cried ; 'for he who calls himself God is by our law to be punished with death. To the High Priest with him !'

"'I can deliver you, great Prophet,' said Æmilius, resolutely. 'Speak but the word, and you shall mount my horse, and be safe in the Castle of David.'

"'The High Priest has sent for me. He must be obeyed,' answered Jesus ; and Æmilius, wondering at His refusal to escape, reluctantly escorted Him to the palace.

"The windows already glared with torches, and the magnificent Hall of Aaron, within the palace, shone with a

hundred lights. The Romans entered, guarding their prisoner, and followed by a tumultuous throng, which each moment increased in numbers. Caiaphas was already upon his throne, although it was long past the hour of midnight—an unwonted time for him to sit in the council-chamber; but his desire to have Jesus brought before him, with whose arrest in Olivet he had been an hour before made acquainted by one of his emissaries, led him to hold an extraordinary court. A score of the elders and chief priests were standing about him, their dark, eager faces earnestly watching the entrance to see the approaching Prophet. Among the most eager of all these was Caiaphas himself, who regarded the eloquent Nazarene as his rival in the eyes of the whole people, and had, therefore, long thirsted for His destruction. As Jesus entered, led by the sorrowful Æmilius, Caiaphas bent forward his tall, gaunt form, thrust out his neck and huge head, and with keen eyes and sharp, inquiring glances, surveyed Him whom he jealously looked upon as his foe.

“The multitude, pressing in, soon filled all the vast hall, and even crowded upon the rostrum, where sat the Scribes, elders, and many of the principal priests. The Roman soldiers marched in with clanging of steel, and arrayed themselves on either side of the High Priest’s throne, leaving Jesus standing alone before its footstool. The scene must have been striking and full of interest to the most unconcerned of those present. On the arched ceiling of the chamber, supported by seventy columns of porphyry, was painted the likeness of the deep blue sky, studded with glittering stars of gold. The walls were of jasper, superbly coloured, with precious stones inlaid, representing every variety of fruit and flower in all their native tints and varied forms of grace and beauty. The hundred torches, reflected a thousand times from the polished surfaces of the columns, spread a magnificent light over all. The gorgeous

robes of the High Priest, his dazzling tiara and priceless breastplate, cast back the radiant beams with indescribable splendour. The steel spear-heads and polished breastplates of the Roman guard gleamed like flames of fire, while the golden crest of the helmet of Æmilius shone amid all this glory like a lesser sun.

"Contrasting with this brightness, surged, and heaved and moved below, the dark masses of the people, in their grey and brown caps and cloaks, for the night was cold, and they wore their winter garments; and all this wild ocean of human forms gleamed with ten thousand eyes, flashing like the light that glitters on the surface of the upheaving sea when the shadow of the storm-cloud hangs above it, and the winds are about to be unbound to lash it into fury. So seemed this terrible sea of human heads; and Jesus was the centre of their looks and of their hate, the Pharos at whose feet these foaming billows of passion broke with terrific power. Of all that countless host, He alone was calm, serene, fearless. Caiaphas gazed upon Him as He stood before his footstool, and in his look was admiration mingled with resentment. The Scribes and priests also gazed curiously, and talked together with gestures of unusual interest. Caiaphas now waved his hand to command silence, and addressed Jesus.

"*'So, then,'* he spoke, with haughty mockery, *'thou art Jesus, the far-famed Galilean prophet. Men say thou canst raise the dead. We would fain behold a miracle. Thinkest thou if we put thee to death presently, thou canst raise thyself up?'*

"Jesus, saith Rabbi Amos, who then entered, and standing near Him saw all, Jesus remained unmoved. His bearing was marked by a certain divine dignity, while a look of holy resignation sat upon His features. He seemed like Peace incarnate in the form of man. A soft influence seemed to flow from His presence, producing a universal but momen-

tary feeling of sympathy. Caiaphas perceived it, and cried, in his harsh, stern voice—

“‘You have brought this man before me, men of Jerusalem; of what do you accuse him? Let those who have accusations come forward and make them. He is a Jew, and shall have justice by our laws.’

“‘The Jews have no power to try a man for his life, most noble Caiaphas,’ said Æmilius. ‘The lives of all your nation are in the hand of Cæsar and of his tribunals. You can put no man to death.’

“This demand of an accusation of Jesus by the people, here made by Caiaphas, was afterwards repeated with more authority by Pilate; and this declaration of Æmilius, which was spoken to save Jesus, was repeated by the Jews before the Roman Governor, to procure His crucifixion.

“Æmilius had spoken in hopes that if Jesus could be brought before Pilate the Procurator, He might be by him released; for he knew Pilate had no envy or malice against the Prophet.

“‘Thou sayest well, noble Roman,’ answered Caiaphas; ‘but for the crime of blasphemy against the Temple we are permitted by Cæsar to judge our people by the laws of Moses. And this man, if rumour comes nigh the truth, has been guilty of blasphemy. But we will hear the witnesses.’

“Hereupon several of the chief priests and Scribes, who had been going to and fro among the crowd, brought forward certain men, whose appearance showed them to be of the baser sort. One of these men testified that he had heard Jesus say He would destroy the Temple, and could again in three days rebuild it more magnificently than it was in the days of Solomon the Mighty.

“Upon this testimony all the priests shouted ‘Blasphemer!’ and demanded that Jesus should be stoned to death; and the passionate Abijah, the most violent of the Scribes, cast his iron ink-horn at Him. but one of the soldiers

caught it on his shield, whereat there was a deep murmur against the Romans, which Caiaphas with difficulty silenced.

"A second witness was now produced by Abijah, who testified that Jesus had taught in Samaria that men would soon no longer worship in the Temple, but that the whole earth would be a temple for Jews and Gentiles.

"When this was heard, some of the men gnashed at Jesus with their teeth, and but for the authority and loud command of the High Priest they would have made an attempt to get Him into their power. The noise of their rage, so great was the madness of the people, is described as having been like the roaring of wild beasts of the wilderness rushing to feast on the slain of a fresh battle-field.

"A third witness, a man who had been notorious for his crimes, now came forward. He carried on his wrist a cock, with steel gaffs upon the spurs, as if he had just been brought from the cock-pit to bear testimony; for such were the sort of men suborned by the priests. He testified that Jesus had said the day would soon come when not one stone of the Temple should be left upon another; that He had called it 'a den of thieves,' the priests 'blind guides' and 'deceivers,' the Scribes 'foxes,' and the Pharisees 'hypocrites.'

"But the fourth and fifth witnesses contradicted each other; neither did the testimony of two others agree; for the one asserted that he heard Him call Himself 'the Son of God,' but was contradicted by the other, who asserted that he was present, and that Jesus had said 'the Son of Man;' and in another case, one said he heard Him say that He and God were One, while the other testified that He had said that God was greater than He. Neither did other witnesses agree together.

"Such opposite testimony perplexed and angered Caiaphas, and confounded the chief priests and Scribes. The High Priest now began to perceive that Jesus would be released for want of testimony against Him. All the while the

prisoner had remained standing before him, bound, with His hands tied across His body, His countenance mild but steadfast, exhibiting, as *Æmilius* described it, 'the firmness and composure of innocence.'

"What! Galilean and blasphemer of God and His holy Temple, answerest thou nothing?' cried the High Priest; 'hearest thou not what these witness against thee?'

"But Jesus spoke nothing. Then Caiaphas was about to break the silence with some fierce words, when a voice was overheard on the other side of the columns, on the left of the throne, where was a fireplace, in which burned a large fire, and where stood many persons. Rabbi Amos at once recognised, in the loud words, the voice of Peter, who had come in with him and John; the latter of whom, in the disguise of a priest, stood not far from Jesus, gazing tenderly upon Him, and listening with fear and trembling to all that they testified against Him; while Peter stood farther off, by the fire, yet not less eagerly hearkening to all that was done.

"Thou art one of the Nazarene's followers,' cried the voice of a maid who brought wood to feed the fire. 'Thou needest not to deny it. I am of Galilee, and knew thee when thou wert a fisherman.'

"Woman, I swear by the altar and the ark of God, and by the sacred tables, I know not the man!

"Thy speech betrayeth thee, now thou hast spoken,' cried the woman: 'thou art a Galilean, and thy name is Simon Bar-Jona. I know thee well, and how, three years ago, ye left your nets, thou and thy brother Andrew, to follow this Nazarene.'

"May the thunders of Horeb and the curse of Jehovah follow me, if what thou sayest is true, O woman! Thou mistakest me for some other man. I swear to you by the head of my father, men and brethren, that I never saw his face before. I know not the man!

"As he spoke," said John, "he cast his angry looks towards the place where Jesus stood. He caught his Master's eyes bent upon him with a tender and reproving gaze, so full of sorrowing compassion, mingled with forgiveness, that I saw Peter start as if smitten by lightning. He then pressed his two hands to his face, and uttering a cry of anguish and despair that made the High Priest look round, and which went to every heart, he rushed out by the open door into the darkness and disappeared. As he went, the cock, which was held tied upon the wrist of the third witness, crowed twice in a loud tone. I then remembered the words of Jesus to Peter, spoken but a few hours before: 'This night, even before the cock crow twice, thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me!' Upon this," added John, "my confidence in my Master came back, full and strong, and I felt that He would not, could not be harmed; for He foreknew all things that could happen to Him, and would yet escape death.

"At length, after great uproar and dissension among the elders, chief priests, and Scribes, Caiaphas, at their demand, brought Jesus before their great council. Their hall adjoined his own. Here they, as well as Caiaphas, questioned Him closely, and said,

"'Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? I adjure thee by the living God, tell us plainly.'

"Jesus then raised His princely form, and bending His eyes upon the face of the High Priest with a look so bright that Caiaphas was fain to drop his eyelids, answered,

"'If I tell ye, O priests, ye will not believe. If I prove it to you from the prophets and by my works, ye will not listen. If I say that I am Christ, ye will not then acknowledge me, nor let me go free. I have spoken openly to you all, in the Temple and in the synagogue. I have concealed nothing. Ask those who heard me what I have said. Nevertheless, I say unto you what I have before taught, that I am the Christ,

the Son of the Blessed ; and hereafter ye shall behold me sitting on the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven.'

" 'Art thou the Son of God ? ' cried several of the priests at once, while Caiaphas held up his hands in horror.

" 'Ye have said that which I AM,' answered the Prophet, His countenance not changing, except to a sublimer look. 'His face,' says John, 'seemed to shine, as he had seen it in the mount, when He was transfigured before him.'

" 'Men of Israel and Judah, ye hear his words ! ' cried the High Priest, rending down the blue lace from his ephod. 'Hear ye his blasphemy ?'

" 'Said I not, son of Aaron, that you would neither believe me nor let me go if I told you who I am ? ' said Jesus. 'I tell you the truth, and ye call it blasphemy.'

" 'Answerest thou the High Priest so ? ' furiously cried Abner,—'the chief officer of the Temple ! ' And he struck Him with the palm of his hand across the mouth.

" Jesus calmly answered,

" 'If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil, and judge me by our law ; but if well, why smitest thou me ?'

" 'Ye have heard the blasphemy,' said Caiaphas, holding forth his hands towards the people. 'What think ye ? Need we any further witness than his own mouth ?'

" 'He shall die the death ! ' cried Abner in a hoarse voice, his eyes glaring red like a leopard's ; and advancing to where Jesus stood, bound and bleeding, He spat in His face twice or thrice.

" This was followed by a loud outcry for the death of Jesus, and several vile fellows also spat upon Him and pulled Him by the beard, and for a while it seemed to be the only thought of all who were near Him to do unto Him some wrong ; and but for the protection of Æmilius and his soldiers they would have torn him in pieces.

" 'Is this Jewish justice ? ' cried Æmilius, angrily, to

Caiaphas. 'Do you condemn and kill a man without hearing witnesses? Stand back! for it is not the custom of the Romans to see men condemned without law. Back, fellows! or your blood shall flow sooner than his for whose death you thirst!'

"At this resolute behaviour they gave way for a moment, and left Jesus standing in the midst, mournful but serene.

"John ran to Him, and wiped the blood from His lips, cheeks, and beard, and gave Him water, which the woman who had recognised Peter compassionately brought.

"'Master, employ Thy power and escape from them,' whispered John.

"'Nay, tempt me not, beloved,' He answered. 'My power is not for my deliverance, but for that of the world. For you I do mighty works, but for myself I do nothing. I came not to save my life, but to lay it down. Mine hour is at hand.'

"'Let not a handful of Romans frighten you, O men of Jerusalem,' cried Abner. 'There is not a legion in all the city. Here we are masters if we will it. To the rescue! Let the lion of Judah roar in his might, and the eagle of Rome will shriek and flee away. To the rescue!'

"'Hold, men and brethren!' cried Caiaphas, who had judgment enough to see that the first blow would be the beginning of a tumult, which would bring down upon the city the Roman army quartered in Syria, and end in the destruction of the nation. 'Hold, madmen!'

"But his voice was drowned amid the roar of the human tempest. Æmilius and his men were borne away by the multitude, and so pressed by the crowd of the Jews that they could not make use of their weapons. In the wild confusion, Jesus was carried by fierce hands to the opposite end of the council-chamber; while Caiaphas strove to appease the wrath of Æmilius, who insisted that the fate of Jesus should be decided by Pilate the Procurator. After a brief consultation

with the chief priests, elders, and scribes, Caiaphas consented; though as he knew that Pilate, being a pagan, would not heed the charge of blasphemy, he resolved with the rest that no accusation of blasphemy should be made, but that He should be accused of sedition and of setting up a kingdom in opposition to the universal empire of Cæsar.

"When Æmilius, aided by the authority of Caiaphas, at length came where Jesus had been dragged, they found Him standing among a crowd of the basest fellows of Jerusalem, who were diverting themselves by slapping His cheeks, and asking Him to tell, by His divine knowledge of all things, who did it. They would also hold money behind Him, and ask Him to name its value or inscription; and when He still kept silence, they struck Him, beat Him with their hands, and cruelly smote Him with their staves, to make Him reply.

"'We will let thee go, O Nazarene,' said one, 'if thou wilt tell how many hairs I have in my beard.'

"'Nay, let him divine,' cried another, 'what I paid for my Passover lamb in the market, and the name of the Samaritan of whom I bought it.'

"'Out on you with your lambs, Kish!' shouted a third fellow, thrusting himself forward: 'let me hear him prophesy. It is rare to find a prophet in these dull times. What, Galilean, art thou silent and sullen? I will make thee speak!' and he swung his staff over the head of Jesus, and would have struck Him to the earth, but for the voice of Caiaphas, which stopped his violence for a moment.

"'Men of Israel,' he cried aloud, 'that this pestilent Nazarene is a blasphemer we have heard with our ears; and by our law he ought to die, because he hath made himself the Son of God. But Cæsar hath taken the sentence of life and death out of our hands. We Jews can put no man to death; the Romans alone have that power. That he hath spoken against Cæsar, and is a seditious fellow, can be proved. Let

us take him before Pilate with this accusation, and if he be found worthy of death, as he will be (unless the Procurator wink at a usurper's rising up in his government, which he will not dare to do), we have shall have the Nazarene hanged on a Roman cross ere the sun reaches the mark of noon on the dial of the Temple.'

"This speech pleased the people, and having again bound Jesus more strictly than before, they all cried with one voice,

"'To Pilate! to the Prætorium!'

"The multitude then poured out of the gates of the palace like a foaming and chafing river which hath overflowed its banks, and with terrible cries, which we heard, startling the dawn, even in our house, took the direction towards the Prætorium. Of the thousands of Jews from the region round about, who crowd Jerusalem like a beehive at this holy season, few could have reposed undisturbed that night, and vast numbers were present at the scene; the noise of the tramp of the multitude shook the very foundations of Mount Zion, while the murmur of voices was like the sound of many waters.

"It was with difficulty that Æmilius could bring the Prophet in safety up the hill, and to the entrance of the Prætorium, which he entered with his prisoner just as the sun gilded the loftiest pinnacles of the Temple, and the trumpets of the Levites sounded to prayers."

In another letter, dear father, I will continue the account of His trial; the remembrance of which, while I now write of it, almost rekindles all my love, faith, devotion, and trust in Him; for who but a man God-sustained could have borne so meekly all this pain, insult, ignominy, and shame?

ADINA.

LETTER XXXII.

MY DEAR FATHER,

This is the evening of the great day of the feast, and the second day since the shameful death of Him whom we all believed to have been a prophet sent from God—nay, more than a prophet, the Christ, the Son of God. Yet He still lies dead in the tomb, and His splendid prophecies of His future glory as King of Israel have perished with Him. Alas! that one so good, and noble, and wise, should have been a deceiver. Henceforth I have no faith in goodness. I have wept till I can weep no more.

I will now resume my narrative of His trial; for I would, by showing you how like a true prophet He bore Himself even before His judges, in some degree excuse myself to you for being persuaded by Him, and accepting Him for all that He professed to be—the very Messias of Jehovah.

It is now the close of the high day of the feast. The slanting rays of the setting sun linger yet upon the gilded lances that terminate the lesser pinnacles of the holy house of the Lord. The smoke of incense curled slowly up to the sky from its unseen altar, and the deep voices of the choir of Levites swelled by those of the tens of thousands of Judah who crowd all the courts of the Temple, fall upon my ears like distant thunder. I never heard anything so solemn. Above the Temple has hung since the crucifixion yesterday the cloud of the smoke of the sacrifices, and it lowers immovably over all the city like a pall. The sun does not penetrate it, though its light falls upon the earth beyond the city, but all Jerusalem remains in shadow; and, shooting over the cloud, the setting sunbeams, catching the lofty pinnacles, make the gloom beneath only

seem the more dark. This cloud is a fearful sight, and all men have been watching it, and talking of it, and wondering. It seems to be in the form of black, gigantic wings, spreading a league broad over Jerusalem.

There it now hangs, plainly to be seen from my window ; but we are in some sort used to its dreadful presence, and cease to fear, though we are lost in wonder. This morning, when a high wind arose, blowing from the Great Sea eastward, every one expected and hoped to see the cloud sail away before it in the direction of the desert. But the wind only shook its whole surface into tumultuous billows, while the mass still retained its position above the city. The shadow it casts is unearthly and fearful, like the dread obscurity which marks an eclipse of the sun.

And this brings to my remembrance, my dear father, what in the trouble of my spirit amid these fearful things I have omitted to state to you, and what is unaccountable, unless men have, in very truth, crucified, in Jesus, the very Son of God. At the time of His death the sun disappeared from the mid-heavens, and darkness like that of night was spread over all the earth, so that the stars became visible ; and the hills on which Jerusalem stands shook as if an earthquake had moved them, and many houses were thrown down ; and where the dead are buried, outside of the city, the earth and rocks were rent, tombs were broken up, and many bodies of the dead were heaved to the surface, and exposed to the eyes of all. These bodies have lain thus all to-day, for the Jews dare not touch them to re-bury them, lest they should be defiled. All this is fearful and unaccountable. It is known, too, that as Jesus gave up the ghost, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain, and the Holy of Holies was laid open to the gaze of every one. What will be the end of these things is known only to the God of Abraham. Never before was so fearful a Passover. Men's faces are pale, and all look as though some dread calamity had befallen the nation. "Can

the death of Jesus be the cause of all these things? If so, He was the Son of God, and men have done unto Him whatsoever they listed. If He is the blessed Christ whom Caiaphas and the priests have crucified, the requital of God's vengeance upon our city and nation is but just begun. But if He was the Christ, why did He not save Himself?

My last letter, my dear father, gave you a narrative of the examination of Jesus before Caiaphas the High Priest, who, not being able to convict Him of anything save suspected blasphemy, and not having the power in his hands to condemn Him to death on this accusation, resolved, that he might secure His execution, to accuse Him before Pilate the Procurator of sedition and treason against Cæsar. But for the fact that the Romans had taken the power of death from the Jewish nation, Jesus would have been stoned to death for blasphemy, by order of Caiaphas and the great Sanhedrim; but a more ignominious death, as a rebel and a usurper of Cæsar's crown, was to be meted out to Him by the Roman law.

Guarded by Æmilius, who was His true friend to the last, and followed by the envious Caiaphas, the fierce Abner, the captains of the Temple, Scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees, Herodians, and a mixed rabble of the Jews, artisans, peasants, robbers, beggars, and all the offscourings of the nation that pour into the city at the Passover season, He was led to the house of Pilate.

The Prætorian gates were shut by the Roman guards as the tumultuous crowd advanced, for Pilate believed the Jews were in insurrection, and was prepared to defend his palace; for so few are the troops with him in the city that he has for some weeks possessed only the name of power rather than the reality. But when Æmilius explained to the captain of the guard that the Jews desired to accuse Jesus the Nazarene of sedition before the Procurator, he was admitted, with

the chief men of the city, into the outer Court of Antiochus ; but none passed beyond the statue of Cæsar, lest they should defile themselves ; and at their call Pilate came forth to them. When he saw the vast concourse of people, with Caiaphas and the chief priests, and many rich Sadducees, with the most powerful men in Jerusalem in advance, and Jesus, bound, and disfigured by the insults He had undergone, and Æmilius and his few soldiers surrounding Him with their protecting spears, and heard the loud voices of the multitude as of wolves baying for the blood of a defenceless lamb, he stood still with amazement for a few moments.

"What means this, Æmilius ?" he demanded of the young prefect. "Who is this captive ?"

"It is Jesus, called the Christ, my lord,—the Prophet of Galilee. The Jews desire His death, accusing Him of blaspheming their God, and——"

"I have no concern with their religion or with the worship of their God. Let them judge him after their own fashion," said Pilate, speaking like a man who cared little for the matter in hand.

"But, most noble Roman," said Caiaphas, advancing to the portico on which the Procurator stood, "by our law he should suffer death ; and thou knowest, though we can condemn, as we have now done this Galilean, we have no power ourselves to put him to death."

"This is well said ; but would you have me put one of your nation to death for blaspheming your God ? As regardeth that matter, O priest," added Pilate, smiling contemptuously, "we Romans blaspheme Him daily, for we worship Him not and will have nought to do with your faith. Let the man go : I see no cause of death in Him."

He then spoke to Æmilius, and desired him to lead Jesus before him. Pilate then regarded Him with mingled pity and interest. After gazing on Him for a moment, he turned to one of his officers, and said aside—

"A form divine, and fit for Apollo, or any of the greater gods! He beareth Himself like a hero! The chisel of Praxiteles, or of Phidias, ne'er traced the outlines of a head and neck like these. He is the very model of human symmetry and dignity."

The courtiers confirmed these criticisms of the indolent and scornful Roman. Jesus in the meanwhile stood motionless before His judge, His eyes downcast and full of a holy sadness, and His lips compressed with immovable patience. Pilate now turned to Him, and said—

"Thou art, then, that Jesus of whom so many men talk? I have long desired to see thee, and I give thanks to Caiaphas who hath brought thee hither. Men say, O Jesus, that thou art wiser than ordinary men,—that thou canst do works of sorcery, and art skilled in the hidden mysteries of astrology. I would question thee concerning these things. Wilt thou read my destiny for me in the stars? If thou answerest well, I will befriend thee, and deliver thee from thy countrymen, who howl yonder for thy blood."

"My lord," said Caiaphas, furiously, "it is not fitting that thou let this man go. He is a deceiver, and traitor to Cæsar. I accuse him, before thy tribunal, of declaring himself King of Judæa."

Upon this the whole multitude shouted their approval in one deep voice of rage and fierce anger, that shook the very walls of the Prætorium.

"How sayest thou?" asked Pilate; "art thou a king? Methinks if thou wert one, these Jews have little need to fear thee." And the Roman cast a careless glance over the mean and torn apparel and half-naked limbs of the prophet.

Before Jesus could reply, which He seemed about to do, for His lips parted as if to speak, there was heard a sudden commotion in the lower part of the Court of Gabbatha (for thus the outer court of the Prætorium, where they were, is

called by the Jews, and a loud hoarse voice was heard crying—

"Make way—give room! He is innocent!"

All eyes turned in the direction of the archway, where a man was seen forcing a path towards the door of the judgment-hall, in front of which Pilate was standing, with Jesus a step or two below him.

"What means this madman?" cried the Procurator. "Arrest him."

"I am not mad! He is innocent! I have betrayed the innocent blood!" cried Iscariot, for it was he, leaping into the space in front of the portico. "Caiaphas, I have sought thee and the chief priests everywhere!" he shouted, on seeing the High Priest. "Take back thy money, and let this holy Prophet of God go free! I swear to you, by the altar, He is innocent! and if thou harm Him, the vengeance of Jehovah shall fall upon thee. Take back thy silver, for He is innocent."

"What is that to us? See thou to that," answered Abner the priest, haughtily; for Caiaphas and the priests were too much surprised at this open exposure of their bribery by Judas to speak; while the eyes of the betrayer, falling under the withering glance of the Roman Procurator, revealed his guilt.

"Wilt thou not release Him if I give thee back the thirty pieces?" cried Judas, in tones of despair, taking Caiaphas by the mantle, and then kneeling to him imploringly.

But Caiaphas angrily shook him off; Abner and the chief priests also spurned him from them as he approached them. At last, in a frenzied manner, he threw himself at the knees of Jesus, and cried in the most imploring tones—

"Oh, Master! Master! Thou hast the power. Release Thyself!"

"No, Judas," answered the Prophet, shaking His head, and gazing down compassionately upon His betrayer, without

one look of anger ; " Mine hour is come. I may not escape. For this hour I came into the world."

" I believed, of a surety, Thou wouldst not suffer Thyself to be taken, when they should find Thee in Olivet, my Master, or I would never have taken their money. It is my avarice that hath slain Thee ! O God ! O God ! I see what I have done, now it is too late !" Thus crying in a voice of despair, he rose and rushed forth from the presence of all, with his face hid in his cloak, the crowd of men falling back hastily as he ran through their midst towards the outer gate.

All were deeply moved at this dreadful sight, and a few moments passed before Pilate could continue the work he had in hand. He entered the judgment-hall, and took his seat on his throne. He then repeated his question, but with more deference than before—

" Art thou a king, then ?"

" Thou sayest truly that I am a king," He answered, with a dignity truly regal ; for all the time, bound and maimed as He was by the hands of His enemies, pale with pain and with the weariness of standing a sleepless and fearful night upon His feet, exposed to cold and to insults, yet He had a kingly air, and there seemed to hover about His head a divine glory, as if a sunbeam had been shining down upon Him.

" Thou thyself hearest him !" exclaimed Caiaphas, standing upon the threshold of the judgment-hall of the Gentile Governor, which he would not enter for fear of defilement.

" He hath, moreover, sought to prevent the people from paying tribute to Cæsar," cried Abner, shouting through an open window ; for he also would not, on account of the holy feast, profane himself by entering a Gentile house.

" He hath everywhere publicly proclaimed himself to be ordained of God to re-establish the kingdom of Judah, and

overthrow the power of Cæsar in Jerusalem," cried the governor of the Temple, lifting his voice so as to be heard above the shouting of the priests and scribes, who, all speaking together, vehemently accused Him of many other things, which we all knew to be false.

Pilate at length obtained silence, and then said to Jesus,

"Hearest thou these accusations? Answerest thou nothing? What defence hast thou to make, O prophet? Yet answerest thou nothing? Behold how many things they witness against thee."

Pilate spoke as if his thoughts were in favour of Jesus, and would give Him leave to speak for Himself."

"He hath perverted the nation; he is a most pestilent and dangerous fellow!" cried Caiaphas. "He is a blasphemer above all!"

"I have nothing to do with your religion. If he hath blasphemed your gods, take ye him and judge him according to your laws," answered Pilate.

"Thou knowest, O noble Roman, that we have no power to put any to death, therefore do we accuse him before thee."

"I am no Jew, priest! What care I for your superstitious quarrels? He hath done nothing, that I can learn, for which, according to the laws of imperial Rome, which now have power here, I can condemn him to death. I therefore command his release, as having done nothing worthy of death. Æmilius, unbind thy prisoner, and let him go. I find no fault in him, that he should be longer held in bonds."

Upon this the Jews sent up a cry of unmingled ferocity and rage. Caiaphas, forgetting his fear of defilement, advanced several steps into the judgment-hall, and shaking his open hands at Pilate, cried—

"If thou lettest this man go thou art not Cæsar's friend. Thou art in league with him. He that sets himself up as a king, in any part soever of Cæsar's dominions, at Jerusalem,

or in Rome, wars against Cæsar. If thou release this man, I and my nation will accuse thee to thy master Cæsar of favouring this Galilean's sedition. He hath stirred up all Jewry, from Galilee to this place, and yet thou findest no fault in him !”

When Pilate heard the name of Galilee, he asked if the prisoner was a Galilean ; and when the angry priest answered that it was so, he said to Æmilius—

“Hold—loose not yet his bonds ! Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, last night came up to the Passover feast of the Hebrew God, and is now at the old Maccabean palace with his retinue. Lead your prisoner to him, and let Herod judge his own subjects. Present him with this signet in token of amity. Tell him I will not interfere with what belongeth to his office, and that I desire he will take the man, and judge him as if he were in his own tetrarchate.”

The chief priests and scribes now shouted their approval of this decision, for they began to fear that Pilate would release Jesus, and they knew that the unstable and reckless Herod would do whatsoever would gain the favour of the people.

“If he send us to Herod with him,” said the priest Abner, “the doom of this impostor is sealed—his blood is ours !”

The multitude without hailed the reappearance of Æmilius and his unresisting captive from the judgment-hall, and followed them across the marble pavement of Gabbatha into the street, crying,

“To Herod ! to the Tetrarch of Galilee with him !”

But Caiaphas remained behind, frowning and ill pleased ; and Pilate, glad to be rid of the necessity of condemning an innocent man in order to gratify the envy of the Jews, by sending Him to His enemy Herod, came smilingly out, and spoke to the gloomy High Priest.

“Thou wert something bitter towards me even now, my

lord Caiaphas. Thou knowest I can condemn men only for crimes committed against the laws of the empire. This Jesus has done nothing that would be adjudged worthy of death were he tried before a tribunal in the capital of the world itself, with Cæsar as his judge."

"Noble Governor," answered Caiaphas—and he paused in his angry striding up and down the porphyry floor of the outer portico—"thou forgettest that I brought him not before thee for blasphemy alone, but for sedition. By the altar of God! this is a crime known to thy laws, I wot?"

"True. You accuse a young, quiet, powerless man, destitute of money, men, or arms—an obscure fisherman or carpenter of Galilee—of setting up a throne and kingdom in opposition to that of Cæsar, the ruler of the earth! This is but a jest. It should be treated only with scorn. So will Herod say when he understands this thing."

"So will not Cæsar say, my lord," answered Caiaphas, with a sneer upon his lip. "If you let this man go (for Herod will not, surely, accept your courtesy, and judge him while he is within your jurisdiction), the Jewish nation will draw up a memorial accusing you to the Emperor of protecting treason. You will be summoned by the senate to answer it; and though you should succeed in clearing yourself, you will lose your government, which will be given to another, and you will live, ever after, under Cæsar's suspicion."

My uncle Amos, who heard all that passed, said that here the High Priest looked with deadly malice into the eyes of the Italian ruler, who turned pale, and bit his lips with vexation.

"My lord priest, thou art bent, I see, on this innocent man's death. I am no Jew to understand how he has drawn upon himself thy terrible wrath, and that of thy nation. He must have done a thing I am incapable of comprehending. I will hear what Herod will say, who, being a Jew, is familiar

with your customs. But it seems to me, O priest, that the testimony of the wretched man whom some of you bribed to betray his master into your power, should now be sufficient to release him."

Pilate now seated himself upon his throne, to give hearing to other complaints.

Half an hour later a youth threw himself from his horse at the door of the court, and drew near the Procurator.

"What aileth thee, Alexander?" demanded Pilate, who saw blood upon his temples; and that he seemed faint.

"But little, my good lord. I was thrown from my horse, who started at a burning torch that lay on the ground, and was detained at a hospitable house until I was able to remount, and thus I come somewhat late."

"And why comest thou at all? What news sends my fair wife, that she should dispatch thee from my house in Bethany at this early hour? No evil tidings, boy?"

"None, my lord, save this packet."

The Greek page then delivered to his master a small roll of rose-tinted parchment, tied with scarlet thread. Pilate cut the knot with his dagger, and after reading the contents became deadly pale. Caiaphas watched him closely, as if he would read reflected in his eyes the words of the scroll which had so deeply moved him.

"Caiaphas," said the Procurator, "this prisoner must be released."

"Either he must fall, proud Roman, or thou," answered the High Priest, as he turned and walked haughtily away.

Pilate looked after him with a troubled air, and then re-entered the hall of judgment, and, seating himself upon his throne, again read the parchment.

"'Have thou nothing to do with this just man,' he read, half aloud, 'for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.' 'The very gods seem to take the part of this marvellous young prisoner,' he cried. 'May

Herod have sense enough to release him, and relieve me of this difficult business. A man might sooner keep in subjection a province of wild and savage Scythians than these fierce Jews. I should be well rid of my procuratorship ; but I will not lose it on an accusation from them. I must save both Jesus and myself."

While he was yet musing, and speaking with himself, unconsciously aloud, so that those heard who stood about him — among whom was El Nathan, the brother of the maid Mirza, who dwells in our household, and from whom I received this portion of the narrative—there was heard a great noise of voices coming from the Maccabean palace ; and as it grew nearer and more distinct, Pilate started up, and cried—

"It is as I feared—Herod hath not concluded this matter, and they come again to me. Oh that the gods would give me wisdom and strength for this trying hour, so that I condemn not the innocent, nor bring myself into the power of an accusation to Cæsar from these wicked Jews."

At this moment the multitude, increased in numbers and malice, if it were possible, reappeared, thrusting Jesus before them. This time He was alone, Æmilius having been separated from Him in the palace, and kept by the crowd from following Him. He was now unbound, and upon His head was a crown of thorns, piercing the temples till the blood trickled all down His face ; upon His shoulders was clasped a royal purple robe, once worn by Herod as a ruler or petty king ; His hand held a reed as a sceptre ; and as He walked onward, the bitterest among the priests, as well as the vilest of the common fellows, mockingly bent the knee before Him, crying—

"Hail, King of the Jews ! Hail, royal Nazarene ! all hail !"

Others went before Him, carrying mock standards ; while others ran as messengers to clear the way, shouting—

"Make way for the King of the Jews! Do homage, all men, to the King! This is the great Jesus, King of Nazareth! Behold his glittering crown! Mark his royal robes, and behold his dazzling sceptre! Bend the knee, bend the knee, men of Judah, before your king!"

When Pilate saw this spectacle and heard these words, he trembled, and was heard to say,

"Either this man or I must perish. These Jews are become mad in their rage, and demand a sacrifice. One of us must fall."

Oh that I could write all I feel! But I am compelled, my dear father, to end here.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXXIII.

MY DEAR FATHER,

In this letter, which I write in the solitude of my chamber while all in the house are sleeping, I continue my account of the trial, if such it can be called, of Jesus. I have already shown you how He was first taken to Annas, and thence dragged before Caiaphas and the Sanhedrim, who, powerless of themselves to put Him to death, sent Him to the Procurator Pilate, charged with conspiracy; while the Procurator, shrinking from condemning a man whom he knew to be innocent of any crime, and yet fearing to release Him, lest he himself should be impeached by the Jews to Cæsar, sought to refer the matter to Herod, in whose tetrarchy lay Nazareth, where Jesus ordinarily dwelt.

John, the ever faithful and trusting disciple whom Jesus

loved, still kept near his captive Master, and sought to cheer Him by looks of love, and, where he could with safety, by kind acts. More than once he was rudely thrust aside by the fiercer Jews, and once several men seized upon him, and would have done him violence, as a follower of the Prophet, if Caiaphas, to whom John is related, and who knows him well, had not interposed. Indeed, it was through this protecting power of the High Priest that the disciple was allowed to remain near Jesus. And while John was thus doing all that he could to soften the harshness of his friend's treatment, we at home were soothing the motherly fears of Mary of Nazareth, the noble and heart-broken woman, whom with difficulty we could restrain from rushing to the palace and casting herself at the feet of the Procurator, to implore him to interpose to save her son from the hands of His own countrymen. Thus there was anguish alike at the palace and in the house of Rabbi Amos. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were also with us, having come into the city so soon as my cousin Mary's letter reached them; moreover, there were with us four or five of the disciples, who had come in, one by one, secretly, for fear of being seized by the Jews, and were anxiously waiting for the things that should come, and firmly believing that Jesus would yet free Himself by His divine and miraculous power. At every sound of a footfall at the door they eagerly cried, "It is the Lord!" But, ah! in vain their hopes and all our longings!

Herod, the Tetrarch of Galilee, who dwelt in the old palace of the Maccabees, which Alexander the Macedonian had built for Seleucus, was breaking his fast with fruit and wine at a table overlooking the Street of the Gentiles, when the noise of the advancing thousands of the Jews, who were bringing Jesus before him, reached his ear. He started from the table, and said,

"These people have surely risen in insurrection against Pilate."

"Not so, great prince," answered the lad Abel, his cup-bearer, who is related to John, and has told me many of these things: "they have taken the Nazarene prophet, Jesus, and are trying him for sedition."

"This uproar proceeds from no trial, but from a wild crowd in motion, and they seem to be approaching," rejoined Herod.

As Herod spoke, he went to the lattice, and beheld the foremost among the multitude just emerging into the street from that which descended from the hill of the Prætorium. At first he could not distinguish any individual object in the confused mass.

"There are Romans with spears in the van, and I see priests and peasants mixed together. I now see the cause of all the tumult—a mere youth, bound and captive, and pale as marble. What say ye, sirs,—is not this the great prophet of whose fame I have heard?" he said, turning to his officers. "What mean they by bringing him hither? Yet am I glad to get a sight of him."

The crowd flowed like the swelling Nile towards the gates, roaring and chafing like the river's mighty cataracts, so that there was something terrible in this display of the power of human hatred. Æmilius with difficulty succeeded in getting his prisoner into the forecourt of the palace, so closely pressed the crowd of Jews around and upon Him. At length he stood with Him before Herod, in the banquet-hall, at the further end of which was a throne, where the tetrarch took his seat, while the Jews filled all the vast room with a billowy sea of eager faces.

"Most royal prince," said Æmilius, kneeling before Herod and presenting the signet, "I am sent by his excellency Pontius Pilate, the Roman Procurator of Judæa, to bring before you this person, accused of blasphemy. Ignorant of your customs and faith, the Governor desires that you, who are of his nation, do examine him; and moreover, Pilate, learning that he is a

Galilean and subject to your jurisdiction, courteously declines to meddle with your authority."

When Herod Antipas heard this courteous message from the Procurator, with whom he had been some time at enmity, he was well pleased, and answered,

"Reply thou to his excellency the most noble and princely Governor of Judea, that I thank him for his great courtesy, and that, in return for such distinguished kindness, I desire to be considered by him as his friend, and that I regret any occurrence that has hitherto estranged us."

Æmilius, upon receiving this answer, arose and bowed, and then said, boldly,

"Most gracious and royal tetrarch, I pray you heed not the accusations of these Jews touching this prisoner. They rise up against Him from a bitter hatred, without just cause. He has done nothing worthy of death. Pilate could find no offence whatsoever in Him deserving of the attention of a Roman tribunal."

"Let not thy prisoner fear," answered Herod, at the same time steadfastly regarding Jesus, as the captive stood before him in the calm majesty of innocence. "I will not take Pilate's office of judgment out of his hand, though he courteously tendereth it to me. If this man hath blasphemed,—Mehercule! the High Priest and the priests of the Temple itself,"—and here he laughed,—"do that every day of their lives; for religion is at a low ebb among the hypocritical knaves! I have nothing to do with their charges of blasphemy, or I would have them all stoned to death without mercy. I will first see some miracles wrought by thy far-famed prisoner, noble Æmilius, and then send him back to my worthy friend Pontius, whom may his gods prosper in all things."

Herod then, fixing his eyes upon Jesus, who had stood silently before him, and who seemed the only unmoved person

in the vast concourse heaving and murmuring around Him, said to the soldiers,

"Unbind him. By the staff of Jacob! he hath been very roughly handled. Men of Israel, it becomes not such as you to do violence to a man before he is condemned; and then, if it be proved that he has done aught deserving chastisement, let the law punish him. This man is a Galilean, and I am bound to see he hath justice, and to protect him from wrong."

While he was speaking John arranged his Lord's mantle about the form of Jesus. Herod regarded with looks of compassion the pale and serene countenance of the prisoner, and seemed struck with the indescribable majesty of His aspect and bearing, and the purity of soul that beamed from His holy eyes.

"Art thou the Nazarene Jesus of whom I have heard so much?" he asked, in a tone of respect.

"I am he," was the quiet answer of the captive.

"Then joyful am I to meet thee, for I have a long time desired to see thee, and I would fain behold some miracle. Men say thou canst heal the sick, restore the maimed, and raise the dead. Does rumour belie thy powers? What! art thou silent? Dost thou know who it is that speaks to thee? Come hither, fellow," he called to a Samaritan muleteer who stood in the crowd, whose oval face and Jewish eyes showed him to be both of Assyrian and Israelitish descent, and whose arm had been cut off by a sword in a contest with Barabbas and his robbers; "come hither, and let this prophet prove his power and mission, by restoring thy arm whole as the other."

The man eagerly came forward, and all eyes were turned upon him and upon Jesus; but in vain he thrust the stump of his arm by Herod's order before Jesus. The eyes of the Prophet were not raised from their meditative look upon the ground.

"Art thou mocking us, thou false Christ?" cried the tetrarch, angrily. Will thou neither speak nor work? If thou art not an impostor, do a miracle before us all, and we will believe in thee."

Jesus remained silent, yet preserved a firm and majestic countenance, that made Him look more kingly than Herod.

"He is a deceiver. He performed his works through Beelzebub, who hath now deserted him!" cried the priests.

"Nazarene," said Herod, "I also am a Jew. If thou wilt prove to me, by a sign that I will name, that thou art the Christ, I will not only become thy follower, but will let thee go free. Thy silence is an insult to my power. I warn thee that my patience is not divine—I make no pretensions to great holiness. Thou seest yonder marble statue of Judas Maccabæus. Command the sword in its hand to wave thrice above its helmeted head, and I will bend the knee to thee. Nay, wilt thou not? I will give thee, then, something easier to do. Seest thou the carved pomegranates on yonder wall? Bid the one which hangs over this column become ripe, natural fruit, and fall at my feet. No?"

"He has no power; his friend Beelzebub hath given him over into our hands. Death to the sorcerer!" Such were the terrible words which now made the hall tremble.

"He is an accursed blasphemer! He calls himself the Son of God! He breaks the Sabbath day! He is a foe to our religion! He would destroy the Temple!" shouted Abner, the priests, and the scribes.

"See the whirlwind thou hast raised, O Nazarene," cried Herod, rising. "If thou art a prophet, these can do thee no harm; and if thou art an impostor, if they kill thee thou deservest thy fate. I give thee up into their hands. Save thyself, if thou be the Christ!"

Scarcely had Herod spoken these words and given up Jesus into the hands of His foes, than, with a savage cry, as the famished jackals in the desert rush upon their prey, they

rushed upon their victim. *Æmilius* could not protect Him ; nay, some of Herod's soldiers, whom the Jews had made drunken with wine, joined them so soon as they saw their master *Antipas* had cast Him off, and began to scoff and mock Him ; and one of them thrust a helmet on His head, and pulled the visor down over His eyes.

"Nay," said Herod, on seeing this, "as he calls himself a king, take ye away the helmet, and crown him, and robe him royally, and place a sceptre in his hand ; and, behold ! yonder block will be for him a proper throne. We must show Pilate how we Jews punish men who usurp the power of his master *Cæsar*."

No words could have better pleased the people, save a sentence of death on Jesus. With a glad shout they began to put into execution the command he had thus wickedly given to them. One of his men of war brought a cast-off robe of purple which belonged to Herod ; and with loud shouts of laughter and with bitter jests they robed Him in it, unresisting as the lamb that is adorned for the sacrifice. One of them then untwined the creeping thorn which grew on the outer wall, and, twisting it into the shape of a crown, handed it over the heads of the men to *Abner*, whose hatred against Jesus was increased by the well-known fact that among the changers of money whom he drove from the Temple was a younger brother of *Abner's*, who was making by his traffic great gains for the avaricious priest ; and *Abner*, therefore, never forgave this act of the Prophet.

When *Abner* saw the crown, he smiled with cruel joy, and nodded approvingly to the man and said—

"This is what we needed. Nought could have been more fitting."

And with his two hands he thrust it down upon the head of Jesus, cruelly pressing the sharp thorns into the captive's brow, till the blood trickled from many wounds. Jesus made no complaint, but the pain forced large bright tears from His

eyes, which rolled down His cheeks and hung upon the purple robe like glittering pearls.

"Here is also a sceptre for our king!" cried the Samaritan with one arm; and he gave a piece of reed, from which a Passover lamb had been slung, to those who were arraying Jesus. This reed was thrust into the Prophet's hand, and He held it patiently. His submission, His silence, His endurance of pain, His constant dignity, and the majestic patience wherewith He seemed to rebuke the malice of His enemies, brought tears into the eyes of Æmilius; and John, unable to help his dear Master, knelt at His feet and bathed them with his flowing tears, nor stirred from Him though men trampled upon him and smote him; but he desired to suffer with his Master, and, as he said to me, would gladly have borne in His stead all the indignities endured by Jesus. Even Herod stood amazed at such godlike forbearance, and said to his chief captain—

"If this man be not the Son of God, he is worthy to be a god. Such lofty patience is more than human—it is divine. The Romans, O Æmilius, would make a hero of such a man, and when he died, worship him as a god."

"Then, mighty prince, why suffer Him to be thus foully entreated?" asked Æmilius.

"It is his own choice. I have made fair proposals unto him. I asked of him but one of those miracles that men say he works, as a proof that he is Messiah, and he works me none—he shows me no sign. Hence I must fain believe that he can do none, and that he is an impostor. Else, why not prove to me his power by working a miracle?"

"Most royal prince," said Abner, aloud, "thou now beholdest this 'King of the Jews' crowned, robed, and sceptred!" and he pointed to Jesus.

"Hail, most great and mighty sovereign of Galilee! Hail, King of Fishermen!" cried Herod, mocking Him, and, as it

seemed, greatly amused at the jest. "If thou wilt tell me where thy chief city lies, I and my court will pay thee a visit. Doubtless thou hast a brave army of Galilean fishermen, and a mighty fleet of fishing-boats. Hail! powerful king! What! fellows, soldiers, and all ye that stand gazing around, bend ye not the knee before this monarch? Do homage to your king!"

Hereupon many who were around Him kneeled, and some, mocking, even bowed themselves to the earth before the Prophet; but He stood so like a king that others who were about to mock Him refrained; while Herod turned away with a troubled look, saying, harshly—

"Take him back to the Procurator."

Once more the vast multitude moved away, and, with mocking cries and insults, led Jesus from the presence of Herod back to the Prætorium.

When Pilate beheld them return in this manner, and understood how that Herod refused to be judge in the matter, he was greatly vexed. When once more Jesus stood before him, arrayed, as I have described, in the purple robe and the crown, Pilate, turning towards Caiaphas and the priests, said, angrily—

"What more would ye have? Why bring this man again before me? Ye say he perverteth the people. Behold, I have examined him before you, and have found no fault in him. You have proved nothing by your witnesses touching those things whereof ye accuse him. I then sent you with him to Herod, and, lo! the Tetrarch of Galilee, one of your own nation, finds nought in him worthy of death. Doubtless he has said something against paying tribute and deserves for this a light punishment, but surely not death. I will chastise him, charge him that he offend not again, and let him go."

"If thou let this man go thou art an enemy to Cæsar," answered Caiaphas. "Seest thou not what a commotion he

has raised in the city? If he is released there will be a revolt, and Cæsar will come and take away our place and nation. Is it better that all men in Judæa should perish than that one man should die? It is expedient that he die for the people. Nothing less than his death will now save our nation."

"In the name of Olympian Jove, O Nazarene, what hast thou done thus to incense these Jews? If thou art their king, prove it to them or to me," demanded Pilate, greatly troubled.

"My kingdom is not of the earth," answered Jesus. "If my kingdom were an earthly one, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews, but my kingdom is not of this world."

"Then thou dost declare thyself a king?" exclaimed Pilate, with surprise.

"Thou sayest truly. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth."

"Truth! What is truth?" asked the Roman; but without waiting for the reply of Jesus, and seeing that the Jews outside the hall were becoming more and more impatient, he hurriedly went out to them, and said—

"I find in the prisoner no fault at all. But ye have a custom, that I should at the Passover release unto you a criminal out of prison, as an act of mercy in honour of the day. Will ye, therefore, that I pardon and release unto you this King of the Jews?"

No sooner had Pilate made this proposal than they all with one voice cried, furiously—

"No! no! not this man! We will not have him released. We will have the vilest malefactor thy prison holds, rather than him."

"Whom then shall I release unto you?" demanded Pilate, in a tone of disappointment.

"Barabbas ! Barabbas !" was echoed and re-echoed by ten thousand voices.

This Barabbas, dear father, is the same fierce robber of whom I have spoken in one of my earlier letters, two years ago, who was then captured by Æmilius, but who afterwards escaped. He has lately been a second time taken captive, while heading a sedition in the city, and lies now under condemnation to death, and was to have been crucified with two of his followers. But at the loud demand of the people, Pilate was now forced to send to the officer of the wards, to let him go free ; and presently he was led forth from his cell to the front of the Prætorium in great pomp, and became one of the most active in enmity to Jesus.

Pilate, therefore, finding that the Jews would be content with nothing less than the blood of Jesus, returned, sorrowfully, into the judgment-hall, where he had left Him seated upon the lower step of his throne ; for the stricken Prophet could stand no longer for weariness and for the heavy treatment He had undergone.

The residue of my narrative, and what pertaineth to the condemnation and crucifixion, I will write in the morning, dear father.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXXIV.

MY DEAREST FATHER,

I now resume the narrative of the condemnation, or rather sentencing of Jesus, after He had been brought a second time before Pilate. The Procurator, finding that the Jews would needs have the Prophet's life, and that, if he

resisted further, he himself would be accused to Cæsar as the protector of a seditious and dangerous man, wavered, and showed an indecision that became not a Roman Governor. His justice forbade him to sacrifice to the hatred of the priests and people an innocent man, against whom no accusation had been proven ; and he feared for his own name and fame should the Emperor, who is always jealous of his Oriental governors, believe their statement of the case.

Jesus, as I stated in my last letter, had, from very weakness, sunk upon the steps of the throne of the hall of judgment. John knelt by Him, bathing the wounds in His brow, from which he had boldly taken the crown of thorns. When Pilate, after giving the order to release the robber chief Barabbas, came again where Jesus was, he stopped, and gazed at Him fixedly, and with a look of sorrow and admiration. The youthful beauty, the dignity even in His anguish, the patience and look of innocence that surrounded Him, deeply moved the Procurator. At length Pilate spoke.

"If thou art indeed a god, O heroic young man, as thy patience would seem to prove thee, thou needest not to fear these wild beasts that howl so fiercely for thy blood. If thou art a deceiver and a seditious man, thou verily deservest death. I would fain let thee go free, but I cannot protect thee. My soldiers are reduced, by sending garrisons to Jericho and Gaza, to less than three hundred men ; and of these raging Jews there are half a million in the city. It is only by my office and show of power that I keep them in subjection. If I release thee, not only thou wilt be massacred, but also all my troops ; for we are but a handful among them. Tell me truly, art thou a son of the divine Jove ?"

When Jesus, instead of replying, remained silent, the Procurator said, sternly,

"Speakest thou not unto me ? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee as a malefactor, and power to release thee ?"

Jesus looked up, and calmly said,

"Thou couldst have no power against me except it were given thee from above. Therefore, he that delivered me into thy hand hath the greater sin."

And as Jesus said these words in a solemn tone, He gazed fixedly at Caiaphas, who was looking in at the door, as if He spoke them concerning the cruel High Priest. Upon this Pilate pressed his hands against his forehead, and paced several times to and fro before the judgment-seat, as one greatly troubled. Caiaphas, seeing him thus doubting, cried, harshly,

"If thou lettest this false king go, O Governor, thou art not Cæsar's friend. Our whole nation accuseth him before thee, of setting himself up to be a king over us, when Cæsar is the only king whom we will have. Release the usurper, if thou darest, and I myself will accuse thee."

Pilate's brow grew dark. He took Jesus by the hand, and leading Him to the portal, pointed to Him, and said aloud,

"Behold your king! What will you that I should do with him? Looks he like a man to be feared?"

"We have no king but Cæsar," shouted the crowd. And some cried, "Crucify him!" and others, "To the cross with the false prophet!"

"Death to the usurper! Long live Cæsar! Death to the Nazarene! To the cross, to the cross with him! Let him be crucified!"

Cries like these from ten thousand throats rose in answer to the Procurator's words. Persuaded, as he has since said, of the innocence of Jesus, and remembering the warning message sent him by his young and beautiful wife, who held great power over him, he trembled with doubt.

"Why will you compel me to crucify an innocent man?" he cried. "What evil hath he done?"

"Crucify him! crucify him!" was shouted in answer.

"I will chastise him and let him go!"

"At thy peril release him, O Roman!" cried Caiaphas, in a threatening voice. "Either he or thou must die this day for the people. Blood must flow to allay this tempest!"

The tumult was now appalling. The voices of the chief priests and people kept up a ceaseless uproar, calling for His crucifixion; while in vain Pilate appealed to their mercy and justice. They drowned his voice with their own, and his commands for silence only increased the roar of the human whirlwind.

When the Procurator saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather the tumult increased, he called for water, which was brought to him in a basin; and in the presence of the whole multitude he washed his hands, saying—

"I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See ye to it, O Jews, ye and your High Priest!"

"His blood be upon us and on our children!" answered Caiaphas; and all the people repeated his words.

"Ay! on us and on our children rest the guilt of his blood!"

"Be it so," answered the Procurator, with a dark brow, and a face pale as the face of the dead. "Take ye him and crucify him, and may the God he worships judge you, not me, for what shall be done this day."

Pilate then turned from them, and said to Jesus, who stood unmoved, with the same heroic and heavenly patience which He had manifested throughout the storm that raged about Him.

"Thou art, I feel persuaded, an innocent man; but thou seest that I cannot save thee. I know thou wilt forgive me, and that death can have no terrors for one who hath fortitude like thine."

Jesus answered nothing; and Pilate, turning from Him with a sad countenance, walked slowly away, and quitted the judgment-hall. As he went, one of his captains said to him—

"Shall I scourge him, my lord, according to the Roman law, which commands all who are sentenced to die to be scourged?"

"Do as the law commands," answered the unstable Roman.

His withdrawal was the signal for a general rush towards Jesus, chiefly by the rabble, who, careless concerning Gentile defilement, crossed the threshold into the hall, which the chief priests had refrained from doing. These base fellows seized Jesus, and, aided by the soldiers, dragged Him forth into the outer or common hall. Here they stripped Him, and, by order of the chief captain, a soldier scourged Him with forty stripes save one. They then re-arrayed his lacerated and bleeding form in the kingly robe, which John had removed when he had taken off His crown of thorns; but now they again put on Him both the crown and the robe, and once more performed the mockery of worship, kneeling, and hailing Him "King of the Jews."

All this Jesus still bore with a godlike majesty. Not a murmur escaped His lips; not a look of anger kindled in the holy depths of His eyes, which from time to time were uplifted to heaven, as if He sought for help and strength from thence.

Not only Æmilius but John was now separated from Him; but my uncle the Rabbi stood near to see what would follow, and, if possible, to do what in him lay to move the chief priests that they might change their purpose of killing Him.

"Good Rabbi," said Jesus to him, "let them do with me what they list. My Father hath given me into their hands. I die, but not for myself: I can keep my life or yield it up, as I will."

"Oh, then dear Master," cried my uncle, "why dost Thou not save Thyself? Why shouldst Thou suffer all this, and death also, if Thou hast power over Thy life?"

"If I die not, then were ye all dead," replied Jesus. "The

Scripture must be fulfilled which is written of me : 'He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.'

Here Rabbi Amos could speak no more to Him, for the crowd dragged Him away out of the Court of Gabbatha, and so down the steep street towards the Gate of the Kings, that leads out to Calvary, the public place of execution, where the Romans, since they have been masters of Jerusalem, have crucified criminals in their cruel fashion. At the gate a Roman centurion took Him into his keeping, and led Him forth, followed by the vast multitude.

Rabbi Amos accompanied the multitude, keeping as nigh to Jesus as the Roman soldiers who marched on either side would let him. On the way, as they crossed the open space where once stood the palace and statue of Antiochus Seleucus, the eyes of the Rabbi were attracted by the cries and the pointing fingers of many of the people to the body of a man who lay dead at the foot of a withered fig-tree. Upon drawing nearer, he knew the face of the traitor Judas, who had so basely betrayed his Master. The spectacle which he exhibited was revolting and horrid to look upon. About his neck was wound a fragment of his girdle, the other half being still bound to a limb of the tree, showing what death he had died. The cord had broken by his weight, and in the fall he had, most dreadful to relate, burst asunder, and the hungry dogs that infest the suburbs were feasting upon his entrails. With cries of horror, several of the mob drove the dogs away ; but the Roman centurion whom Pilate had ordered to crucify Jesus for the Jews commanded four of his soldiers to convey the hideous corpse from sight, and see that it was either burned or buried.

"If," said Rabbi Amos to John, who now rejoined him, "if the accusers of Jesus are to be punished like yonder man, this will be a fearful day for the men of Jerusalem. Judas the betrayer hath died before his victim, and by his own hand. This looks like divine retribution, and as

though Jesus were, in truth, the favoured Prophet of the Highest."

By this time the people who were dragging Jesus to death had all passed the gate, when a heavy cross of cypress wood was obtained by the centurion from a yard near the lodge, wherein stood several newly-made crosses, awaiting whatsoever victims Roman justice might, from day to day, condemn to death. Two others were also brought out, and laid upon the shoulders of two men, the companions of Barabbas, who were also that day to be crucified. The released Barabbas was himself present, and in order to please the people he was among the most active in laying the cross upon the back of the faint and drooping Jesus.

By the time the great crowd had passed the gate, it was known throughout all Jerusalem that Pilate had given command for the crucifixion of the Nazarene Prophet; and, with one mind, all who had known Him, and believed in Him, or loved Him, left their houses to go out after Him to behold His crucifixion; for I forgot to say that Caiaphas had promised, if Jesus were delivered up, that His followers should not be molested. Therefore, all men went out of the gate towards Calvary. Mary, his mother, my cousin Mary, Martha and her sister, Lazarus, John, and Peter and Thomas, with some women, relatives from Galilee, and many others also went. When we had come beyond the walls, we seemed to leave a deserted city behind us. So far as the eye could see, there was a countless multitude moving along the vast space between the Gate of the Kings and the place of Calvary. Jesus was in front, where we could now and then catch the gleam of a Roman spear. We hastened to get near Him, and with difficulty made our way to the head of the throng; both foes and friends letting us pass, when they saw His weeping mother among us.

At the approach to Calvary we found that, from some cause, the course of the mighty living current was checked.

We soon learned the reason. Jesus had sunk to the ground under the weight of the wooden cross whereon He was to die, and fainted.

"He is dead!" cried those about Him; but, as we drew near, He was just reviving, some one having put wine to His lips and poured water upon His brow. He stood up, looking mildly around, and meeting His mother's gaze, He said touchingly—

"Weep not, my mother! Remember what I have often told thee of this hour, and believe. The sword pierceth through thy soul, but my Father shall uphold thee. Mine hour is come."

Thus speaking, He smiled upon His mother and upon us, while His countenance shone with a look of divine peace.

Barabbas the robber, who had in some degree taken upon him to lead the mob, now, with the aid of three men, raised the cross again on the shoulders of Jesus, and the soldiers commanded Him to move on. But the young victim sank beneath the heavy load. Upon this they were at a loss what to do; for it is an abomination for Jew or Gentile to help in bearing a malefactor's cross. Not a Roman would touch it; nor would the Jews, for fear of defilement, which would compel them to be set apart afterwards for many days' purification. Barabbas again raised Jesus to His feet, and began to scourge Him, to make Him drag the heavy cross up the steep of Calvary. But he had no strength to advance with it, though He strove to obey His tyrannous executioners. But now they saw a Syro-Phœnician merchant, Simon of Cyrene, a good man, well known to all in Jerusalem, and father of the two young men, Rufus and Alexander, who were followers of Jesus, for they have sold, the last year, all they had, that they might become His disciples, and sit at His feet and listen to His divine teachings. Their father was, for this or some other reason,

hated by Abner, who, on seeing him, pointed him out to the centurion as one of the Nazarenes, and asked wherefore he should not be compelled to bear the cross after Jesus.

Immediately the Cyrenian merchant was dragged from his mule and led to the place where the cross lay. He believed he was about to be himself executed. But when he beheld Jesus standing pale and bleeding by the fallen cross, and understood what was required of him, he burst into tears, and kneeling at his Master's feet, said—

"If they compel me to do this, Lord, think not that I am consenting to Thy death! I know that Thou art a Prophet come from God! If Thou diest to-day, Jerusalem will have more precious blood to answer for than the blood of all her prophets."

"We brought thee hither not to talk, old man, but to work," cried the chief priests. "Thou art strong-bodied. Up with this end of the cross, and walk thou after him!"

Simon, who is a powerful man, raised one end of the beam, and Jesus essayed to move under the weight of the other; but He again sank down.

"Let me bear it alone, Master," cried the stout Simon; "I am the stronger. Thou hast enough to bear in the weight of Thine own sorrow. If it be a shame to bear a cross after Thee, I glory in my shame, and my two sons would glory likewise were they here this day."

Thus speaking, in a courageous and bold voice, and looking as if he would as gladly be nailed to the cross for his Master as carry it after Him (for Simon, as well as his sons, had long believed in Him), the man of Cyrene lifted the cross and bore it on his shoulders after Jesus, who, weak from anguish and from loss of blood, and weary unto death, had to lean for support against one arm of the cross.

Ah, my dear father, what a place was that whereon we walked! Skulls lay scattered beneath our feet, and everywhere human bones were bleaching in the sun; and we trod in heaps of ashes, where the Romans had burned the bodies of many of those whom they had crucified.

At length we came to this place of death, where five crosses were already standing. Upon one of them hung a criminal still alive, who had been nailed to it the noon before. He called feebly for water, but some derided him, and all passed him unheeded. There was an empty space in the midst of this Golgotha; and here the centurion stopped, and commanded the crosses to be set in the rock, where deep holes had been already cut. The crosses carried by the thieves were now thrown down by them: one uttered a curse, while the other sighed, as if he feared the anguish he was to suffer upon it.

The largest cross of the three was that for Jesus. It was taken by three soldiers from the Cyrenian merchant, and cast heavily upon the earth. The centurion ordered his soldiers to clear a circle with their spears about the place where the crosses were to be planted. The Jews who had crowded near, thirsting for their victim's blood, made way slowly and unwillingly before the sharp points of the Roman lances thrust against their breasts; for the centurion had full threescore men-at-arms, beside a number of Herod's guards. So great was the desire of the Jews to get near, that weak women were perforce driven to a distance. But John held his place close by his Master. He tells me that Jesus continued to manifest the same fearless patience when the centurion commanded the crucifiers to advance and nail the malefactors to their crosses. The robber Ishmerai, who was an Edomite, seeing the man draw near with the basket containing the spikes and hammers, scowled fiercely upon him with a defiant look. He was instantly seized by four savage Parthian soldiers of the Roman guard, and stripped, and

thrown upon his back upon the cross. He was a strong man, and his struggles were so violent, that six persons were required to hold him down upon the arms of the cross, with each palm spread open to receive the nail, which one of the crucifiers, pressing one knee upon the wrist, drove through the flesh into the wood by three quick and powerful blows with his short, heavy-headed hammer. Ishmerai gnashed his teeth as the nail entered the quivering flesh. The other hand, in like manner, was fastened with difficulty to the other arm of the cross, and then, the feet being laid one over the other, a long sharp spear-nail was driven through both into the timber, while a shriek, mingled with curses, bore testimony to the agony suffered by the wretched man.

Thus secured, he was left, bleeding and writhing, by the six crucifiers—for there are four to bind the victim, one to hold the spikes, and the sixth to drive them in with his hammer; and from the glance I caught of their half-naked and blood-stained figures, they seemed worthy to hold the dreadful office which made all men shun them as if they were leprous.

They now approached Omri, the other robber, who was a young man of a mild countenance, whose noble features did not seem to belong to a thief. He was the son of a wealthy citizen of Jericho, and had by riotous living spent his patrimony, whereupon he had joined himself to Barabbas. He had heard Jesus preach in the wilderness of Jordan, and had once asked Him, with deep interest, many things touching the doctrines He taught. John, who had seen him talking with Jesus a few months before at Bethabara, now knew him, and saw him regard the Prophet with reverential looks, and more than once heard Jesus speak kindly words to him as they went to the place of crucifixion.

When the crucifiers drew near to him with their cords, baskets, nails, and iron hammer, he said—

“I will not compel you to throw me down: I can die as I

have lived, without fear! As I have broken the law, I am ready to die according to the law."

Thus speaking, he stretched himself upon his cross, and extending his palms along the transverse beam, suffered the tormentors to nail him to the wood, uttering not a moan. He glanced towards Jesus while this was done, with a look of courage, as if he sought to show Him that the pain could be borne by a brave man. And peradventure Jesus looked as if He needed an heroic example before Him to show Him how to die without shrinking, for His cheek was like the marble of Paros in its whiteness, and He seemed ready to drop to the earth from weakness. His youth—His almost divine beauty, which not even His tangled hair, and torn beard, and blood-streaked countenance could wholly hide—the look of heavenly innocence that beamed from His eyes, drew upon Him many glances of pity, even from some of His foes. The centurion, who was a tall man, with a grizzled beard, and with the hardy look befitting an old Roman warrior, looked upon Him with a mournful gaze, and said—

"I do not see why men should hate thee, for thou seemest rather to be a man to be loved; but I must do my duty, and I hope thou wilt forgive me for what I do. A soldier's honour is to obey."

Jesus smiled forgiveness upon him so sweetly that the stern Roman's eyes filled with tears, and he held his gauntleted hand before his face to conceal how much he was moved, as he said—

"Pilate would not do this thing were there another legion or two with him. It is the weakness of his escort that compels him to sacrifice thee, to please these howling Jews."

This was spoken in a low tone to Jesus, who made no reply; for at this moment the crucifiers drew nigh, to nail Him on the cross that lay at His feet.

But, my dear father, I can go on no longer now with my

narrative. I am weary of weeping at the recollections it brings before me, and at our present affliction. In my next letter I will complete my account of the crucifixion of the Prophet of Nazareth, with whose crucifixion and death all our hopes in Him as Messias of God are dead likewise.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXXV.

*Jerusalem, third morning after
the Crucifixion.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

It is now dawn, and I have arisen early, as I shall leave the city to-day with my uncle, Rabbi Amos, and the whole family; for we are to flee to Bethany, for fear of the Jews, who, notwithstanding the pledge given by Caiaphas, are diligently seeking throughout Jerusalem all who were followers of the slain Prophet. As an hour or two will elapse before all things are ready for our safe departure, I will occupy the interval in completing my sorrowful narrative of the crucifixion of Jesus; especially as Rabbi Amos, finding I have been so careful in recording all things concerning Him, desires me to omit nothing, as my account may hereafter be useful for a remembrance, and may perhaps, if necessary, be laid before Cæsar, in defence of such as may be sent to Rome accused of sedition. I feel that my poor letters, dear father, are only valuable to you and those I love; but if they can aid in explaining anything for the justifying of the poor Nazarenes, who are now despised and persistently hunted out, they are at the service even of the mighty Cæsar himself. Their only merit is their plain truthfulness, so far

as circumstances have enabled their writer to ascertain the truth.

My heart bleeds afresh as I write, by the faint light of the dawn, the story of the crucifixion of the unhappy son of Mary. That Mary, widowed and childless, still remains with us, mourning over her dead son. There is a beauty in all that concerns Him, even now that He is dead, and has proved Himself as weak a mortal as other men, which urges me to write of Him, and which fills my thoughts only with Him.

I have spoken, even now, of His grief-smitten mother. Alas! there is no consolation for her. Her loss is not like that which may befall other mothers. Her son has not only been taken from her, but has died a shameful death on a Roman cross, executed between two vile malefactors, as if He Himself were the greatest criminal of the three; put to death, moreover, as a false prophet, as a deceiver of Israel, as one who had uttered a thousand glittering promises of Judæa's future glory through Him—promises which now, as His death proveth, were vain, and made only that He might draw all men after Him. She thus mourns not as other mothers, and refuses to be comforted.

Yet her love for her son—that wondrous love of a mother, which seems immortal in its nature—is not buried with Him. With dearest Mary and Martha she hath even now gone out secretly, before the Jews are astir, to pay the last duties to His dead body ere we all depart to seek a resting-place in Bethany. They have taken spices, myrrh and aloes, and sweet herbs, that they may embalm the body; for His mother hopes to get permission of Pilate to remove it to Bethlehem, that it may be laid in the tomb of His fathers. Until they return from this sad mission of love I will continue to write of the crucifixion.

When the centurion to whom was committed by Pilate the ordering of the crucifixion of Jesus gave command to nail Him also to the cross, which lay upon the ground like an

altar awaiting its victim, the Parthian soldiers, His cruel crucifiers, laid hold upon Him, and began to strip Him of His garments; for His enemies had put again on Him His own clothes, when they led Him out from the hall of Pilate. He was clad in a mantle, woven without seam by Mary and Martha, and which had been given to Him by the sisters, as a token of their gratitude for that He had raised from the dead their brother Lazarus.

When I saw them remove this robe, which was a visible attestation of His former power over death, I could not believe that He could Himself be killed, but thought that He would yet break away, by some mighty miracle, from His foes, and, scattering them like dust before the wind, proclaim Himself with power the very Son of God. But when I perceived that He stood calmly and sorrowfully, letting them do what they would, I lost all hope, and turned away weeping. His mother, whom John upheld, could no longer gaze upon her son, and was borne afar off, crying in bitter grief—

“Oh, let me not hear the crashing of the nails into His feet and hands! My son! my son! Oh, that Thou wouldst now prove to Thy mother that Thou art a true Prophet!”

“What means this wailing?” cried the fierce Abner: “who is this woman?”

“The mother of Jesus,” I answered.

“The mother of the blasphemer? Let her be accursed!” he cried, in fierce anger. “Thou seest, woman, what cometh of bringing up an impostor to blaspheme Jehovah and the Temple. Thy hopes and his, O wretched woman, have this day miserably perished. Thus perish all false Christs and false prophets! Thou seest, if he were the Christ, he would not stand there and be crucified like a common malefactor.”

Mary hid her face in her hands, and wept on my shoulder. I could not look towards the place where Jesus stood. I dreaded to hear the first blow upon the cruel nails; and as she stopped her ears, I would have closed mine also, but that my

hands supported her. I could hear the awful preparations—the rattling of the hard cord as they bound Him to the cross, and the low eager voices of the busy Parthians, and then the clinking of the spikes, and then a silence like that of the grave. Suddenly a blow of a hammer broke the stillness. A shriek burst from the very soul of the mother, that echoed far and wide among the tombs of Golgotha. I could see and hear no more.

John having left the stricken mother with me, he and Lazarus had gone back to where they were unrobing the Prophet to bind Him to the cross. They caught the eyes of their Master, said Lazarus, who gazed upon them calmly and lovingly. They said they had never before beheld Him appear so majestic and great. He looked, as the centurion afterwards said, "like a god surrendering himself to death for the safety of a world."

• "Nothing but the ferocious madness of the chief priests and Jews," saith John, "could have prevented them from being awed by the majesty of His presence. Moreover, there sat upon His brow heroic courage, with a godlike humility and resignation. Not the rough hands of the barbaric soldiers, not the indignity of being stripped before the eyes of thousands, not the sight of His cross, nor of the thieves nailed and writhing on theirs, moved Him to descend in look or bearing from that celestial dignity which through all His sufferings had never left Him.

"He resisted not when bound upon the cross," continued John, who told me what follows, "but yielded Himself into the hands of His executioners like a lamb that is led to death. 'Father,' He said, raising His holy eyes to heaven, 'forgive them, for they know not what they do.' But His heroic soul could not prevent him from suffering anguish as a man. The piercing nails, rending His tender flesh, made it quiver, and caused Him to turn more pale than before, while a deep sigh escaped His breast as He heard His mother's shriek. Unlike

the first robber, He did not resist; unlike the second, He did not harden Himself in indifference; but He met His fate like a man who fears not death, yet does not brave it.

"When they nailed His feet to the wood, great drops of sweat stood upon His forehead," added John, who remained near to see his Master die, and to comfort and strengthen Him; "and when the four men raised Him and the cross together from the earth, and let the end drop into a hole a foot deep, the shock, bringing His whole weight upon the nails in His hands, tore and lacerated them, while every sinew and muscle of His arms and chest was drawn out like a cord to sustain this unwonted weight upon them. The first thief fainted from pain at the shock caused by the setting of his own cross; and the second, brave and defiant as he had been, uttered a loud outcry of agony. But Jesus made no moan, although the unearthly pallor of His countenance showed how unutterable was His torture."

Ah! my dear father, I would fain speak no more of these things, for they are too sorrowful. To the last John believed his Master would not die—that He could not perish. But when he saw how that pain and anguish seized heavily upon Him, and how that He suffered like other men, without power to help Himself, he greatly marvelled, and began to doubt whether all the miracles that he had seen Him perform had not been illusions. He could not reconcile with imposture the calmness and dignity, the heroic composure and air of innocence, with which He went to the cross; yet the death of Jesus would, as he thought, seal as imposture all His previous career.

The three crosses, with that of Jesus in the midst, the place of chief dishonour, being raised aloft and fixed in the rock, the centurion commanded that the space around should be cleared, and the malefactors left to die. Oh, what a fearful death for Jesus!—for Him whom we knew so well, and whom we still loved, although He had deceived us. There, thought

we, He may linger two or three days, dying slowly, as some have done, and exposed to the heat of the sun by day and to the cold winds of night, while above Him hover on restless wings the eagles, hungry for their feast. With His mother, we all now drew as near to the cross as we were permitted to go. Jesus then turned His head towards His mother, and, looking down with the deepest tenderness and love upon her, committed her to the filial care of the weeping John, who stood supporting her.

Much of the residue of this account I have from John, who remained to the end close to the cross, while we stood afar off with His weeping mother, Mary of Bethany, Martha, Lazarus, and Mary the mother of Salome, and other women, our friends from Galilee, who also had been followers of Jesus. There we waited, in expectation of seeing Him do some mighty miracle, and descend unharmed from the cross, showing forth to the world that He was indeed the Messiah.

The centurion, having placed a guard about the crosses to keep the friends of the crucified from attempting to remove them, stood watching them. The soldiers who had nailed Jesus to the tree now began with noisy oaths to divide among themselves His garments, as well as those of the two thieves, these being, by the Roman law, the fee of the executioners. This division being made after some time, but not without much strife and drawing of their long Syrian knives upon each other, they were at a loss what to do with the large mantle without seam which the sisters of Lazarus had woven for Him who had restored to them their dead brother. A group of the Roman guard being seated near, astride upon the arms of a fallen cross, playing at dice, proposed that the Parthians should decide by lot whose it should be. To this the Parthians consented, and taking the dice-box in their bloody hands, each of them threw thrice. The highest number fell to the most ferocious of the four fellows, who, taking the mantle, wrapped it about his huge form, and

pace up and down before the people, said in a loud voice that he himself was a great sorcerer, and in his broken, barbarous tone, asked some of the Jews if they would have him prophecy and foretell their fortunes. At this they began to cry out upon him and stone him as a blasphemer, and but for the centurion a tumult would have arisen. The soldier then proposed to sell the cloak, which John joyfully purchased from him at a great price, giving him the jewels of several of the women, who gladly took rings from their ears and bracelets from their arms; and I myself, dear father, gave the emerald which you bought for me at Cairo: for I could not see the robe which Jesus had worn thus desecrated, inasmuch as we still loved Him, even in His death. The mother of Jesus received the robe with thankfulness towards us all. But now, my dear father, how shall I describe the events that followed?

After Jesus had hung about an hour upon the cross, Æmilius came from Pilate, and brought the inscription which it is usual to place above the heads of malefactors, showing forth their names and the crimes for which they are crucified. Above the head of Ishmerai was written in Syriac—

“ISHMERAI, THE EDMITE, A ROBBER.”

Above that of Omri was inscribed also, on a leaf of parchment, in the same tongue, his name and the nature of his crime, which was that of robbery and blood-shedding during a sedition in the city.

By means of a small ladder, a soldier placed above the head of Jesus this inscription in Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:—

“THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

When the wicked Abner read this, he turned angrily to the centurion, and to Æmilius, who stood sorrowfully near the cross, and said—

“Write not, O Roman, that he is ‘King of the Jews,’ but that he said that he was King of the Jews.”

"I have placed above him what Pilate hath commanded to be written," the centurion answered.

Abner, upon this, mounted a mule, and hastened into the city to the Procurator, and laid his complaint before him.

We have heard that the Procurator coldly answered—

"What I have written I have written, sir priest."

"But you then have crucified this man for being our king, which we deny," cried Abner.

"I will believe his word before that of all the Jews in Caesar's empire," answered Pilate, angrily. "He said he was a king; and if ever a king stood before a human tribunal, I have had a true and real king before me to-day—and I have consented unto his death. But his blood be on your heads; for I was compelled to do this deed or lose my procuratorship, for you would have cited me before Cæsar as a traitor. Quit my presence, Jew. Have I not, against my own desire of justice and humanity, consented to gratify your thirst for this innocent man's blood? What more do you demand? Is he not crucified? If you come into my presence but once more on this matter, by the gods of Rome I will crucify you, and tenscore more. I will pile a hecatomb to his manes."

Abner left his presence abashed, and returned to the place of crucifixion. The Jews, in the meanwhile, mocked Jesus, wagging their heads at Him, and reminding Him of His former miracles and prophecies.

"Thou that hast saved others, save thyself from death!" said a Pharisee.

"If thou be the Son of God, prove it by coming down from the cross!" cried the leader of the Sadducees, Eli.

"Thou, who saidst if a man kept thy sayings, he should never see death—let us see if thou canst escape death thyself!" said Iddo, the chief of the Essenes.

"He saved others—himself he cannot save!" cried the mocking Ezekias, one of the chief priests.

Æmilius, finding it impossible to save the Prophet from

crucifixion, had come out to guard Him from the insults of the rabble while He was dying. He had now lost faith in Jesus as a Jewish Prophet, but he loved Him still as a man, and pitied Him for His sufferings. He talked with Him, and earnestly prayed Him, as He hung, if He were indeed a god, to show His power. Jesus at first made no reply ; but soon He said, in a faint voice—

“ I thirst.”

The generous knight ran and filled a sponge with the preparation of sour wine and hyssop usually given to malefactors after they have hung for a while on the cross to stupefy them, and render them insensible to their sufferings. While Æmilius was fixing a sponge, dipped in this vessel of vinegar, upon a reed, Ishmerai, who all the while as he hung had uttered curses upon his crucifiers and upon Pilate, began howling fiercely to Jesus—

“ If thou be the Son of God, save thyself and us ! If thou didst raise a man once from the dead, thou canst surely keep us from dying ! Thou art a vile wretch if thou hast power as a prophet, and will not use it for me, when thou seest how heavy I am of body, and how my great weight tortures me with infernal racking and rending of every joint.”

But Omri, rebuking his fellow, said—

“ Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation ? We suffer justly for our crimes, and to-day do receive the due reward of our transgressions ; but this man hath done nothing amiss, save indeed that He preached against the wickedness of the priests, and hath showed Himself holier than they. Lord, I believe that Thou art the Son of God ! None but the Christ could do the works that Thou hast done, or suffer patiently as Thou art suffering. Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom ; for I know Thou wilt go from this Thy cross to Thy throne on high, and there reign for ever and ever. I have listened to Thy teaching on the banks of Jordan, and I believe.”

Jesus turned His bleeding head towards him, and, with a smile of ineffable glory lighting up His pale face, said—

“Verily, I say unto thee, this day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.”

Omri, upon this, looked unutterably happy, and seemed to forget the anguish of his sufferings. The other cursed the Prophet aloud, and gnashed at Him with his teeth, with looks of rage and hatred,

At this moment Æmilius came near with his dripping sponge, and presented the reed to the parched lips of the suffering Jesus. When He tasted it He would not drink; for He perceived it was the opiate which was usually given in compassion to shorten the anguish of the crucified.

The robber Ishmerai now eagerly cried out for the sponge of mercy; and the prefect gave the reed to a soldier, who placed it to the mouth of the robber, whose swollen tongue protruded. He drank of it with a sort of mad thirst. The other man also gladly cooled his burning fever with it, and soon afterwards both of them sank into insensibility, showing no other signs of life than the heaving of their chests, and the twitching of the muscles from time to time. But Jesus, retaining His senses in all their clearness, suffered all the agony that such a fearful death can inflict.

Suddenly, just as the sixth hour was sounded from the Temple by the trumpets of the Levites, the cloud which, formed by the smoke of the numerous sacrifices, had hung all day above the Temple, was seen to become suddenly of inky blackness, and to advance towards Calvary, spreading and increasing in the most appalling manner as it approached us; and in a few minutes, not only all Jerusalem, but Calvary, the Valley of Kedron, the Mount of Olives, and all the country, were involved in its fearful darkness. The sun, which had before been shining with noon-day brilliancy, became black as sackcloth of hair, and a dreadful, unearthly, indescribable night overshadowed the world. Out of the

centre of the cloud, above the crosses, shot forth angry lightnings. But there was no thunder—only a dead, sepulchral, suffocating silence.

Of the thousands who had been gazing upon the crucifixion, there was not one but fell prostrate upon the earth in terror. Jerusalem was blotted out from our view: only an angry glare of fire-red light, as it were the terrible eye of God itself, was visible above the Temple, over the place of the Holy of Holies. The crosses were no longer visible, save by the fearful brightness of the lightnings, flashing fiercely from the dread and silent cloud. The form of Jesus, amid the universal gloom, shone as if divinely transfigured, and a soft halo of celestial light encircled His brow like a crown of glory; while the dark bodies of the two robbers could scarcely be discerned, save by the faint radiance emanating from His own.

The darkness continuing, many of the multitude at length ceased moaning, beating their breasts, and rending their garments, and arose to their feet, but moved not; for none could stir from his place, for the midnight depth of the gloom. Men talked to each other in whispers. A mysterious dread was upon each mind; for the sudden overspreading of the darkness was as strange as it was frightful. Mary, His mother, and Lazarus exclaimed with awe, both speaking together—

“This is *His* power. He has produced this miracle!”

“And we shall behold Him descend from the cross,” cried Rabbi Amos. “Let us all take courage, and let that which disarms His enemies fill us with joyful expectation.”

Three hours—three long and terrible hours—this supernatural light continued; and all that while the vast multitude remained motionless and afraid, waiting for they knew not what. At length the cloud parted above the cross, with a loud peal of thunder, while a shower of terrible lightnings fell, like lances of fire, all around the form of Jesus, which immediately lost its halo and its wondrous radiance. His face became

expressive of the most intense sorrow of soul, and He seemed, to all eyes, to be the central point of this fierce wrath of the heavens.

A hundred voices exclaimed, with horror—

“See! he is deserted and punished by the Almighty!”

We ourselves were amazed and appalled. Our rising hopes were blasted by the livid lightnings, which seemed to blast Him! HEAVEN, as well as man, seemed to war against Him! His mother gave utterance to a groan of agony, and sank upon the ground, well assured that her son was accursed of God. And now, as if to confirm all our fears, He cried in the Hebrew tongue, with a loud voice, that, in the deep silence, reached the ears even of the Roman guard on the citadel—

“*ELOI! ELOI! My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?*”

Upon this, certain of those that stood by, pitying His sufferings, ran to give Him wine and hyssop, to deaden them.

“Nay, let him live—let us see if Elias will save him,” said Abner. “He calleth for Elias the prophet.”

Suddenly the darkness, which had filled all the air, seemed to concentrate and gather about the cross, so that He who hung thereon was no more seen. From the midst of it His thrilling voice was once more heard, as clear and strong as it had once rung over the waters of Galilee, when He had preached from a boat to the thousands thronging to the shore—

“*IT IS FINISHED! Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit.*”

As He uttered these words a supernatural glory shone round Him, and with a deep sigh He bowed His head upon His breast, and gave up the ghost.

The general outcry of surprise that followed these clear trumpet tones was suddenly stopped by a terrible trembling of the earth beneath our feet, so that vast numbers of people were cast down, the rocks of Calvary were rent, and the

whole city shook with the convulsive throes of an earthquake. The Temple seemed on fire, and above its pinnacle appeared a flaming sword, which seemed to us to cleave the walls to their foundations ; and while we looked the sword changed into the shape of a cross of dazzling light, standing high in the air over the altar, and from its golden beams poured rays so bright that all Jerusalem and the hill country around were lit up as at noon-day. The ground still continued to shake, and the sepulchres of the kings, with the tombs of ancient prophets, were riven by vast chasms, and the green earth was strewn with the bones and bodies of the dead. The dark cloud, which had first begun to form with the smoke of the sacrifices of the Temple, was now scattered by the light of the fiery cross, and the sun reappeared, before which the glorious vision over the Temple gradually faded, and was seen no more. The natural order of things then returned ; and men, smiting their breasts, began to move towards the city, filled with awe and dread at what they had witnessed. The centurion, who stood watching these fearful signs, said aloud to Æmilius—

“This man spake the truth : he was a god !”

“Of a truth,” answered Æmilius, “this was none other than the Son of God—the very Christ of the Jewish prophets ! All things in the air and on the earth mourn because of His death, as if the God of Nature had given up the ghost.”

Sad and weeping, we left the dismal scene, hanging our heads in sorrow, having, even while wondering at the mighty signs that were shown at His crucifixion, abandoned for ever all hope that this was He who should have redeemed our nation, and restored the royal splendour of Judah and the throne of the house of David.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXXVI.

*Jerusalem, third morning after
the Crucifixion.*

MY DEAREST FATHER,

I closed my last letter only to resume, in another, the mournful narrative which I have been writing to you. It is now half an hour before sunrise, and as those who went forth to the sepulchre have not yet returned, I will still continue to tell of these things. The mother of Jesus, who I thought went with the two Marys and Martha, remained at home, unable to bear the sight of her dead son.

On the day whereon the wonderful things were done whereof I have spoken at large in my last letter, that day which for its signs and wonders can never be forgotten in Jerusalem, the chief priests, at the head of whom was Annas, met Pilate as he was riding forth from the city, attended by a score of soldiers, to survey the deep rents made by the earthquake, and to hear from the mouths of the people the report of the marvels shown forth at the crucifixion of Jesus. When they came near to him, they besought him that he would command his soldiers to take down the bodies, as the next day was a high day, and it was contrary to their customs to have criminals executed or left hanging on that day.

"What think ye?" asked Pilate, reining up his Syrian war-horse, which, startled at the dead bodies that lay near (for they were crossing the place of the opened tombs), had for some time plunged madly; "what think ye, priests? Have ye crucified a man or a god? We think these mighty wonders tell us that he was more than a man. All nature is disturbed at his death. The sun veiled his brightness, the heavens clad

themselves in mourning, Jove sent forth angry lightnings, and the earth heaved and rocked as if sharing the universal woe."

The priests looked troubled, and seemed unable to answer; but Tereh, the chief priest of the house of Mariah, answered—

"My lord, these were wonderful tokens, but they would have happened if this Nazarene had not died. Here is a famous astrologer from Arabia, who readeth the skies; and he says that this darkness was caused by an eclipse of the sun. The dark cloud was but the smoke of the sacrifices, and earthquakes have shaken the earth ere now."

"Stay, sir priest," answered Pilate; "we at Rome have some scholarship in astrology. We know well that an eclipse of the sun can take place only when the moon is new. It is to-day, on this eve of the high day, at the full, and will to-night rise nearly opposite the sun. It was no eclipse, sir priest, and thy Arabian is a false astrologer. These things came to pass because that divine man, your king, has been put to death."

"Why not for the two robbers likewise?" asked Abner, with an unbelieving sneer on his lip.

Pilate made no reply, and was riding on, when Tereh, on behalf of the chief priests, asked permission of him to have the bodies of the crucified men removed from the crosses and buried.

"They cannot be dead yet, for it is only seven hours since they were nailed to the cross," said Pilate. "I will see for myself."

Thus speaking, the Roman Procurator spurred on towards the place, followed by his guard, now avoiding an open grave, now leaping one of the freshly opened chasms, now turning aside from some body cast up by the earthquake. When he came in front of the crosses, he saw that Jesus hung as if dead, while the thieves still breathed, and from time to time heaved groans of anguish, though they were partly insensible from the effects of the drink which had been given to them.

"Thinkest thou, Romulus, that he has any life in him?"

asked Pilate, in a subdued voice, gazing sorrowfully and with looks of awe upon the drooping form of the victim.

"He died an hour ago," answered the centurion. "He expired when the earthquake shook the city, and the flaming sword was unsheathed in the air above the Temple. It was fearful to behold, and the more wonderful to see it change in the shape of a cross of fire. I fear, sir, we have crucified one of the gods in the shape of a man."

"It would appear so, O centurion," answered Pilate, shaking his head. "I would this thing had not been done. But 'tis past. The Jews desire that the bodies be removed before their great Sabbath. Cæsar hath commanded that they shall be satisfied always in all things touching their religion which do not offend against the imperial laws. Let them have their desire. The robbers are not yet dead."

"They are nearly so. I will break their legs and remove their bodies, your Excellency," answered the centurion.

Pilate then turned his horse and rode slowly and sadly from the spot. Romulus gave command to his soldiers to remove the bodies. One of them, with an axe, approached the robber Omri, and at two blows broke his knees. With a shudder that shook the cross he ceased to move. The first blow upon the limbs of Ishmerai caused him to open his eyes and to mutter a half-formed curse; but at the second stroke his huge head fell upon his broad chest, and the next moment he hung there dead. When the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw that He was dead already.

"Let us not break his legs," said one to the other: "it were sacrilege to mar such a manly form."

"Yet we must be sure of his death ere he can be taken away," responded the other. "I will pierce him with my spear."

Thus speaking, the soldier thrust at the side of Jesus, and cleaved the flesh to His heart. John, who stood near, and saw and heard all, upon seeing this done, bowed his

head to the earth in utter despair. Until that moment he had believed that Jesus would revive and come down from the cross ; for to the last our faith in His power to save Himself was firm, though greatly tried when we saw Him in the hands of the Roman soldiers. Even when we beheld Him nailed to the cross we did not give up hope, for we had all seen Him raise the dead Lazarus, and felt that He could free Himself from the cross also ; and although, after the earthquake, we left the hill and returned into the city, sorrowing and smiting our breasts, we often lingered and looked back to where He hung, expecting to see Him descend from the cross, and proclaim Himself by that mighty miracle the Son of God. John, first having delivered the mother of Jesus to our care, remained with many of the women and others who had loved and followed Him, watching and expecting some great event.

But when the unhappy disciple saw the Roman spear pierce his Master's side, his own heart seemed to be pierced also. All hope perished within him. Jesus was dead, and this proved that He was not the Christ of God, as He had proclaimed Himself to be. Yet John felt not anger, but rather sorrow, for he had greatly loved Him.

When he raised his head to gaze upon his crucified Master, he saw flowing from the rent in His side two fountains ; one was of crimson blood, and, lo ! the other was of water ! He could not believe what he saw, until the soldiers and the centurion spoke aloud their wonder at such a marvel.

"Never was such a man crucified before," cried the centurion. "He is without doubt one of the immortal gods, and therefore have the heavens and earth been moved with anguish at the deed."

When John saw that Jesus was indeed quite dead, and that all hope of His restoration to life was destroyed, he drew near, and asked permission of the centurion to have the body ; for he had promised the mourning mother of the

dead son that he would recover it, if possible, for the rites of burial. But the centurion, though a good and generous man, answered that he could deliver the body to no man without an order signed by the Procurator's own hand.

Therefore, when he had obtained the promise of the centurion that the body should not be taken down until his return, John ran quickly towards the city to ask the consent of Pilate. But in the meantime Rabbi Joseph, the counsellor of Arimathea, whom, dear father, you have many years ago well known as a just and holy man, and who now stands high in favour with Pilate, met the Governor as he was passing the wall of the city with his cohort, and asked him if, after Jesus should be pronounced dead, he might take down the body and give it burial. Pilate did not hesitate to give his ready consent to this request, and taking from his purse a small signet ring engraved with his cipher, he placed it in the hands of the rich Rabbi.

"Go and receive the body of this just man," he said. "Methinks thou art one who knew him well. What thinkest thou concerning him, O Rabbi?"

Joseph, perceiving that Pilate asked the question with deep interest, and that he seemed greatly troubled in mind, answered him boldly—

"I believe that He was a prophet sent from God, and that to-day has died on Calvary the most holy, the wisest, and the most innocent man in Cæsar's empire."

"My heart doth echo thy words," answered Pilate, gloomily; and putting spurs to his horse, he galloped forward in the direction of the Garden of Gethsemane.

John, therefore, did not see Pilate; but on returning from the city, weary and disappointed, he met the ruler Nicodemus, who, attended by one of his Gibeonite slaves, was hastening into Jerusalem to purchase spices and linen to wrap the body in, as our manner is to bury. From him John learned with great joy how that Rabbi Joseph had seen Pilate, and

obtained from him permission to take down and bury the body.

When John came to the cross, he found that Joseph, with the aid of Lazarus, Mary, Martha, and Rabbi Amos, had taken it out of the socket in the rock, with its precious burden, and gently laid it upon the ground, with the body still stretched upon it. With many tears and lamentations they drew forth the copper spikes from the torn hands and bleeding feet, and with water from a pool near at hand they washed the precious blood away, and wrapped the white limbs in the spices and linen which Nicodemus presently brought.

The bodies of the robbers were meanwhile taken, or rather torn, down by the soldiers, who cast them together into one of the yawning chasms rent by the earthquake, and covered them with fragments of stone, which the soldiers, assisted by some of the baser Jews who still lingered about the place, threw down upon them. It was a great favour obtained from Pilate that the body of Jesus was not cast into the pits also.

In the still, holy twilight of that dread day, the west all shadowy gold and mellow light, the air asleep, and a sacred silence reigning in heaven and on earth, they bore away from the hill of death the body of the dead Prophet. Nicodemus, Peter, Lazarus, and John gently sustained the loving weight of Him they once honoured above all men, and whom, though, as they believed, He had fatally deceived Himself as to His divine mission as the Christ, they still loved for the sorrows He had so patiently borne, and whose virtues they vividly remembered.

Slowly the little group wound their way along the rocky surface of Golgotha, the last to leave that fearful place in the coming darkness. Their measured tread, their low whispers, the subdued wail of the women who followed the rude bier of branches, the lonely path they trod, all combined to render what they did a solemn and sacred thing. The shades of

evening were gathering fast around them. They walked by secret ways, for fear of the Jews. But some that met them turned aside with awe when they knew what corpse was borne along; for the remembrance of the fearful things done that day had not yet wholly passed away from their minds. At length they reached a gate in the wall of the garden belonging to the splendid abode of the wealthy Rabbi Joseph, who went before, and with a key unlocked it, and admitted them into the secluded enclosure. Here the thickness of the foliage of olive and fig trees made a complete darkness; for by this time the evening star was burning like a lamp in the west. They rested the bier upon the pavement beneath the arch, and awaited in silence and darkness the coming of torches, which Rabbi Joseph had sent for to his house. The servants bearing them were soon seen advancing, the flickering light from the torches giving to all things visible by it a wild look well in keeping with the hour.

"Follow me," said Joseph, in a low voice that was full of great sorrow, as the servants walked before him with their torches.

The silent bearers of the dead body of Jesus raised their sacred burden from the ground and trod onward, their measured footfalls echoing among the aisles of the garden. At the end thereof, where the rock hangs steep over the valley, and forms at this place the wall of the garden, was a shallow flight of stone steps, leading to a new tomb hewn out of the rock. It had been built for the Rabbi himself, and had just been finished, and in it no man had ever been laid.

The torches flashed brightly upon its massive door, and upon a dark cypress tree whose branches drooped in majestic gloom around it. It looked a fitting resting-place for the dead, so silent, so solemn, so peaceful was all around.

The servants, at the command of Joseph, rolled back the stone, and opened the dark vault of the gaping sepulchre.

"Wherefore, most worthy Rabbi," said a Roman centurion, suddenly lifting up his voice to speak, "do you thus bury with honour a man who has proved himself unable to keep the dazzling promises wherewith he has allured so many among you?"

All turned with surprise at seeing not only the centurion, but half a score of soldiers, on whose helmets and armour the torches brightly gleamed, as they marched across the grass towards the spot.

"What seekest thou here, O Roman?" asked Rabbi Joseph.

"I am sent hither by command of the Procurator," replied the centurion. "The chief Jews have sought him out, and informed him that the man whom he had crucified had foretold that after three days he would rise again; they therefore asked that a guard might be set over the sepulchre till the third day, lest his disciples secretly steal away the body and report that their master is risen. Pilate, therefore, has commanded me to keep watch to-night with my men."

While the centurion was yet speaking, several of the priests whom Joseph knew drew near, bearing torches; and also a company of women, relatives of Joseph and Mary, who had heard where they were burying the body, came to see the place where He was laid.

"We bury Him with this deference and respect, O centurion," answered Rabbi Joseph, "because we believe Him to have been deceived, not a deceiver. He was gifted by God with vast power, and therefore, doubtless, believed He could do all things. He was too holy, wise, and good to deceive. He hath died because He wished to do that for the weal of Israel which it was impossible for man to do. We honour thus His memory inasmuch as we love Him, even though we are deceived in that He hath not established the kingdom in Judah."

The Body of Jesus, wrapped in its shroud of spotless linen,

and surrounded by the preserving spices of Arabia, was then borne into the tomb, and laid reverently upon the table of stone which Joseph had prepared for his own last resting-place. By the light of the torches all present looked once again on the body, even the women of Galilee also ; and ere they closed the tomb, Mary of Bethany, her sister Martha, and Lazarus appeared, to gaze likewise for the last time upon the calm features of the dead Prophet ; for since the wondrous signs attending His death, we are all now assured He must have been a Prophet, and that we have wholly misunderstood many of His sayings and prophecies concerning Himself. Simon Peter was the last to quit the body, near which he knelt as if he would never leave it, shedding all the while great tears of bitter grief. But John at last, drawing him gently forth, enabled the centurion and the soldiers to close the heavy door of the tomb. Having secured it evenly, the signet-bearer of the Procurator, who had come with the soldiers, placed a mass of wax, melted by a torch, upon each side of it over the crevices, and sealed the stone with the imperial signet, to break which is punishable with death.

The Jews who were present, seeing that the sepulchre was thus made sure by the sealing of the stone and by the setting of the watch of eighteen Roman soldiers, departed. Rabbi Joseph, Nicodemus, and the rest of the friends of Jesus then slowly went their way, leaving a sentinel pacing to and fro before the tomb, and others standing or sitting around, beneath the trees or on the steps of the sepulchre, playing at their favourite game of dice, or gazing upon the broad moon, conversing, or singing the songs of their native land ; yet with their arms at hand, ready to spring to their feet at the least alarm or word of alert. The tall mailed figure of the centurion, standing motionless, leaning upon the hilt of his long straight sword beside the tomb, was at length shut out from the view of the retiring disciples by the angle in the path, which now turned in the direction of the gate.

Something fearful must have happened as I write, for the house has even now been shaken as if with an earthquake. What can be the meaning of these wonders ?

I have now, my dear father, told you the history of the arrest, trial, judgment, crucifixion, death, and burial of the mighty Nazarene Prophet. It is now nearly daybreak, and I am not weary of writing you on so great a matter. I have written thus at large, not only to enable you to see as if you had been present at all that hath been done, but at the request of my uncle, Rabbi Amos, and also to lighten my own fulness of sorrow. It was due to myself, who have believed in Him so firmly, to show that, although He was crucified and is dead, the marvellous signs that were shown forth at His crucifixion attested that He was more than a man, if not the true Messiah ; and that, therefore, there is excuse not only for me for being His disciple, but for all others who followed Him. You can likewise understand, my dear father, from the honourable manner in which He was buried by the wise counsellor, Rabbi Joseph of Arimathæa, that He was deemed by him innocent of any crime worthy of death, and that Rabbi Joseph believed Him to have been deceived rather than a deceiver.

It is this view of His character, arising from His patience, His dignity, His forbearance, His appearance of divine innocence on His trial, which makes us all still think and talk of Him with sorrow and with tears. All that remains to us of Him is His body, and to this we have paid the homage of our reverence and love.

This morning Mary and Martha, with others, have gone to visit His tomb in Joseph's garden (as I have already said), for the purpose of embalming His corpse ; and on their return we are to go to Bethany for a few days, until the violent hostility of the Jews to His followers shall subside. The Procurator is daily looking for four legions of Roman soldiers from Syria to strengthen him ; and then he will be able to protect us, and maintain completely the supremacy of the

Roman power. Oh that these forces had been here on the day of the crucifixion! for then, says Rabbi Amos, Pilate, conscious of military strength, would have acted boldly, and saved Jesus from the hands of His foes.

I now hear the voices of Mary and Martha in the court of the street, as they return from the tomb. They are talking loudly, and their voices sound joyously! What can mean the commotion—the outcries—the running and shouting all through the corridors and court? I must close this letter, and fly to learn what new terror or wonder has occurred.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXXVII.

Jerusalem, first day of the week.

O FATHER, MY DEAR FATHER!

How shall I make known to you, in words, the marvellous, joyous, happy, and most wonderful news which I have to tell? My heart beats, my hand trembles with delight, while a feeling of profound awe filleth all my soul. *Jesus is alive!* Jesus has RISEN FROM THE DEAD! Jesus has proved Himself to be the Son of God!

Oh! now *we know* that Jesus is indeed the Messiah who should come. Oh that I should have doubted! Alas! that I should have written to you such words of disbelief and of doubt, and in my heart have thought Him a deceiver! But I have seen Him—seen Him, dear father! and He has forgiven me. None of us understood His words which He spake to us before His crucifixion concerning His death, and hence all our amazement and despair. But now we clearly perceive the meaning of all, and are amazed at our

dulness and disbelief. His death, to us that understood Him not, seemed to convict His life of falsehood ! To us it seemed proof that He was a false prophet ; but now that He is the Son of God is clearly proven by His resurrection from the dead.

I can scarcely hold my pen for joy and wonder, or collect my thoughts for very amazement, when I think of what has been done. But I will try and write calmly and soberly, to make known to you the mighty events which have come to pass to-day.

My last letter to you I suddenly closed, being interrupted by loud outcries of gladness, and great confusion of running and shouting, in the courts and corridors below. Upon hearing my name called by Mary and others, in eager, joy-trembling tones, I hastened to go down. I met my cousin ascending the staircase, almost flying. Wonder, love, and happiness inexpressible beamed from her beautiful countenance. Meeting me, she threw her arms round my neck and essayed to utter words ; but her heart was full, and, bursting into sobs, she wept convulsively upon my bosom in an ecstasy of joy.

Amazed and troubled, not knowing what had happened, I held her to my heart and tried to calm her. The voice of Martha now came to my ears from the foot of the stairs, talking eagerly to Rabbi Amos, who answered her with loud outcries of wonder.

"What—oh, what hath been done? Speak, dear Mary!" I asked, unable to wait longer in doubt.

She raised her head, and through her tears and smiles at length whispered—

"He—He—is—risen—oh ! *He is risen from the tomb !*"

"Who?" I cried, half believing, yet doubting.

"The Lord !—our mighty Master—Jesus—the very Son of God the blessed ! He is *alive*, Adina !"

"You have seen a vision, or your grief at His death, Mary, has made you mad," I answered her.

Upon this she released herself from my arm, and gazing upon me with her large, earnest eyes, said—

"Adina, be not faithless but believing. Jesus is risen from the dead. He lives! I have seen Him—He has spoken to Mary of Bethany, Lazarus's sister, and also to me. Oh, joy, joy! He is the very Son of the Highest, and we have not been deceived; but oh! we have been blind, and deaf, and ignorant, that we have not understood that He was to die, and rise again the third day. Come—delay not! I have run into the city to tell thee; and Mary has told Peter and John, whom she met at the door, and who, doubting, as thou also hast doubted, have run to see if these things be so. They will find the sepulchre empty. Haste to go with us."

While, overwhelmed with wonder and trembling with joy, I was preparing to accompany her, Martha appeared, her face radiant with heavenly happiness.

"You have heard the tidings of great joy, O Adina?" she cried.

"Can they be true, Martha?" I asked earnestly.

"Yes, for I have seen Him walking, and heard His voice, and touched Him. You also shall see Him, for He hath sent us to tell His disciples."

I wept aloud for joy, and we went forth in haste to behold Him.

At the gateway we met Mary of Bethany, who had been telling the news to Peter and John, and had also made it known to Rabbi Amos and Nicodemus. They were all together in the court, talking sorrowfully upon the crucifixion, when she burst in upon them with the cries I had heard—*"He is risen!—He is risen!"*

We three now hastened together towards the garden of Joseph, I wishing I had wings to my feet, that I might come to the sepulchre the sooner, fearing that the vision of Jesus would have vanished ere I arrived. As we were going out of

the gate, we were met by four or five Roman soldiers, who, with faces full of fear, were running past us into the city.

"What means this flight and terror?" cried the captain of the gate. "You fly as if an enemy were pursuing. Speak, Marius: you seem to have lost your senses," he said sternly to the youngest of the soldiers, an officer under a centurion.

We paused to hear what he said.

"Verily, O captain, we have been terrified beyond measure," answered the soldier. "My heart beats yet as if it were an alarum drum. We were a part of the guard left in charge of the sepulchre of this Jewish prophet, who hath been crucified three days ago. At dawn this morning, as I was pacing to and fro before the tomb, and while my comrades were reclining around taking their rest, and while I was idly gazing at the morning star, there suddenly shone round about us a light like a descending meteor, accompanied by a rushing as of a legion of winged spirits. The men started to their feet in amazement. On looking about us, I saw a dazzling form in the mid-heavens, with broad wings of gold, sparkling with myriads of stars, every feather a star, and clad in raiment white and gleaming as the summer lightning. This terrible presence, like that of one of the immortal gods, made us fear exceedingly, beyond any terror we had felt before. But when we saw this mighty being descend straight towards the tomb, and beheld the resplendent majesty of his celestial countenance, which blinded us, our hearts died within us. The angel or god alighted amid a blaze of radiance at the door of the sepulchre; and as his foot touched the earth, it trembled as if with a great earthquake. The soldiers shook with terror, and fell to the ground before his presence as dead men. I stood, unable to move, frozen to a statue by fear. He touched the great stone door with one of his fingers; it rolled outward at his feet as if a thunderbolt had struck it, and, like Jove taking his throne, he sat upon it.

"But one thing more," continued the soldier, "was wanting

to fill my cup of terror to the brim, and this thing came to pass. I saw the crucified prophet rise up from the slab on which he was laid, and stand upon his feet, and walk forth alive with the tread of some mighty conqueror. The celestial being who had descended from heaven, terrible in his shining majesty, veiled his face with his wings before his presence, and prostrated himself at his feet, as if in worship to one greater than himself!

"I saw no more, but fell to the earth insensible with terror. When at length I came to myself, the tomb was filled with dazzling forms of the brightest beauty; the air rang with music such as mortals never before heard; and I fled, pursued by my fears, the rest of the soldiers rising and following me, each man fearing to look back; but being bewildered, we lost our way."

"This is indeed marvellous," answered the captain of the gate. "I saw the light and felt the earthquake, but I thought it was a thunderbolt which had struck the ground near Calvary. Go let the Prefect Æmilius, or Pilate himself, know what has happened."

The soldiers hurried forward into the city; while, more certain now than ever that Jesus was risen, I hastened, with Martha and Mary, towards the garden.

"Thou believest now, Adina?" said Mary of Bethany to me, as we ran onward.

"Yes; only let me behold Him face to face, and I shall be willing to die. How looked the risen Lord, Mary?" I asked. •

"There was the same benign and holy expression He ever wore, the same divine majesty, the same loving countenance and heavenly dignity."

"How and where did you behold Him, Mary?" I asked further, as we drew near to the steep path leading to the gate of Joseph's garden.

"When we came to the tomb, with our spices and precious

ointments, to embalm the body, we found the tomb open, and the soldiers who had guarded it were lying about on the ground like dead men. Upon the stone sat the archangel ; but the gleaming light of his apparel and countenance was so tempered to our eyes, that, although we believed he was an angel, we were not terrified ; for his looks were serene, and his face showed divine beauty, with a terrible and indescribable majesty. We shook with fear, and stood still, unable to move, gazing on him in silent expectation.

“‘Fear not,’ he said, in a voice that seemed to fill the air with undulating music, ‘fear not, ye daughters of Jerusalem. I know that ye seek Jesus which was crucified. He is not here, but is risen, as He foretold. Lo ! see the place where the Lord hath lain.’

“We then drew near with fear and trembling, and looked in, and saw the sepulchre empty ; but a soft light filled the whole place.

“‘Go and tell His disciples that the Lord is risen,’ said the angel, ‘and that He will go before them into Galilee. There shall they see Him not many days hence.’

“When the angel had thus spoken to us,” continued Mary, “we departed quickly from the sepulchre, with fear and great joy, and ran to go into the city, to bring His disciples word, according to the command of the angel. But I had not advanced so far as the gate of the garden, being behind the rest, when I beheld Jesus Himself standing in my path. I stopped, being filled with terror and joy.

“‘All hail, daughter of Israel !’ He said. ‘Be not afraid. I am living. It was needful that I should die and rise again, that I might raise up from the dead all who die in me to life immortal. Go, Mary, and tell my mother, and my brethren, and Peter, and John, and Lazarus, that I am risen, and that I have spoken with you. Behold my wounded hands, that it is I myself. Be not afraid. I am the resurrection and the life.’

"I then cast myself at His feet, and worshipped Him with awe ; and when I again looked up, He was not there.

"The others did not see Him. We now continued to hasten to the city as if we had wings ; yet, rapidly as we went, some of the same Roman watch whom we met coming in even now passed us in their flight and alarm, for they fled at first in different parties, taking different ways. But see ! we are now at the gate of the garden," added Mary of Bethany, in a voice of awe. "He must be near us."

But we approached the tomb without seeing any man, having arrived before Peter and John, who had been delayed some time at the Joppa Gate, which way they took as being the nighest ; but the gate was not opened when they reached it, and they were detained. We, therefore, found no one at the sepulchre. It was open and empty. The stone in front, on which the archangel had sat, was lying there. As we drew near, a bright light suddenly shone out from the tomb ; and drawing nigh, I beheld two angels clothed in white robes, and with countenances of divine radiance, seated, one at the head and the other at the foot of the slab of marble on which Jesus had lain. At the sight of these wondrous and beautiful beings, who we knew were sons of God come down from heaven, we were affrighted. I sank upon the stone which had been rolled away, and remained speechless with terror.

"Be not afraid, O daughters of Jerusalem," said one of the angels, speaking to us in the Hebrew tongue. "He whom you seek liveth, and dieth no more. He is risen from the tomb, which could not hold Him but with His consent ; for Jesus is Lord of life, and hath conquered death and hell for evermore. Go your way, and tell His disciples that He awaits them by the sea-side."

The angels then vanished from our sight ; and at the same moment John and Peter came running ; and seeing the stone rolled away, John stooped down and looked in, and said that

he saw the linen clothes in which the body of Jesus had been wrapped lying folded together, and also the napkin which had been bound about His head. Peter now coming up, breathless with eagerness and haste, no sooner saw the tomb open than he went boldly in, and examined all for himself. He then called to John, who also went in, and both were convinced that their Lord had indeed risen from the dead; and when we made known to them what the angels had said to us, that Jesus would go before and meet them in Galilee, they rejoiced greatly; and shortly afterwards departed, to hasten into Galilee, no longer doubting, but believing. I also returned with them, to convey the news to Mary, the mother of Jesus, who had not left the house, and scarcely her couch, in her great sorrow, since the day of the crucifixion. Mary of Bethany, however, remained near the tomb, hoping that Jesus had not yet left the garden, and that she might once more behold Him.

As she sat upon the steps of the tomb, weeping for joy at His resurrection, and wishing once more to behold Him, she heard a footstep behind her, and, turning round, saw a man standing near. It was Jesus Himself; and kneeling, she was about to clasp His feet, when He said to her—

“Touch me not, Mary. I am not yet ascended to my Father. But go and tell Lazarus, and my brethren, and my mother, that I ascend ere many days unto my Father and your Father, and unto my God and your God.”

Jesus then vanished out of her sight, and she came and told all these things to us and to the disciples; and we all believed, never more to doubt, that Jesus was Messiah and Christ, the immortal Son of the Father. Such joy as filled the hearts of His friends was never before felt by men. Our happiness and joy now were as great as our sorrow had been before His resurrection.

But what pen can describe, my dear father, the amazement and consternation of Caiaphas, and the chief priests, and the

rest of His enemies? The soldiers who had kept guard at the sepulchre had entered the city by different ways, and spread the report of the mighty miracle of the resurrection through the principal streets in Jerusalem as they fled onward.

Caiaphas, hearing the uproar, sprang from his couch to inquire the cause, and on being assured by his servants that Jesus had burst His tomb and risen alive from the dead, he trembled and became deadly pale. But he soon rallied, and sending for two or three of the soldiers, who were describing what they had witnessed to a large concourse in the street, he questioned them closely upon this matter. The soldiers' testimony agreed together, and could not be gainsaid.

When Pilate received the account from the centurion of the guard, he said—

"We have verily crucified a god, as I believed! Henceforth I am accursed!" And leaving his hall of judgment, he went and shut himself up in his own chamber, which he has not since left. But men say he neither eats nor sleeps, and that a darkness and gloom have settled upon his soul.

Caiaphas and the chief priests and scribes in the meanwhile assembled together in full Sanhedrim; and hearing the testimony of the centurion, were convinced that the fact could not be concealed of Jesus' resurrection.

"Who hath seen him alive?" asked the High Priest.

"I have seen him, my lord," answered the centurion; "I saw his pierced feet and hands as he walked by me, and the morning wind blew aside his mantle and exposed to my eyes the open wound made by the spear of my soldier Philippos. He was alive, and in full strength of limb."

"Thou sawest a vision, O Roman," answered Caiaphas. "Come hither with us, that we may talk with thee."

A few minutes afterwards the centurion left the court of the High Priest's palace, followed by a Gibeonitish slave, bearing after him a vase of Persian gold. He has told every one since that he must have seen a spirit, for "that the disciples

of Jesus came by night and stole away the body of their Master while the guards slept, overcome with watching." His soldiers have also been bribed to tell the same tale.

Such is the false rumour that now goes about the city, my dear father ; but there are few that believe it, even of our enemies. As Æmilius, who is filled with great joy at the resurrection of Jesus, to-day said—

"If these soldiers slept on guard, they have deserved death by the military laws of the empire. If, while they slept, their charge—the dead body of Jesus—was taken away, they deserve death for failing to hold it. Why, then, are they not placed under arrest by Pilate's orders, if this story be true? Because Pilate well knows that it is not true! He knows this is false, because he has privately examined many of the soldiers, and knoweth full well that Jesus did burst His tomb, and that angels rolled away the stone without breaking his seals, which could not have been left unmarred but by a miracle. He knows that Jesus has arisen, for it is believed that he also beheld Him—at least, such is the rumour at the Prætorium. It was the form of Jesus visible before him, doubtless, that drove him in such amazement from his hall to his secret chamber ; for it was remarked that he started, turned deadly pale, and essayed to speak to the empty space before him, as if he saw a spirit. Therefore his soldiers are not punished ; and that they are allowed to go free is proof that the body of Jesus was not stolen away while they slept. Besides, if these soldiers were asleep, how could they tell that it was stolen away, and declare the persons who did it?"

This is the unanswerable reasoning of the Prefect Æmilius ; and thus you see, dear father, that Caiaphas can gain little by his cunning and by his diligently-circulated falsehood. That Jesus of Nazareth is risen from the dead is true ; and if I had not seen Him, the evidence would be enough to convince me of the fact.

Besides the things I have told you, there is the increasing

testimony of the thousands who to-day have gone out of the city to see the sepulchre where He was laid. They say—both the enemies of Jesus as well as our friends—that it was impossible for the door to have been opened by any human being, even by Pilate himself, without marring the seals. They also assert that to remove the stone by night, which would require four men, and to bear forth the body, would have been impossible if the guard had been present; and if the soldiers had been asleep, they must have been awakened with the noise made by rolling the massive door along the hollow pavement outside the sepulchre.

“If,” say the common people, “the watch slept, why doth not the Procurator put them to death?”

This question remains unanswered, and the soldiers go about the streets unharmed. My dear father, remember no more my unbelief, but with me believe in Jesus, that He is the Son of God, the Saviour of Israel, the immortal Christ of the prophets.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXXVIII.

*Bethany, House of Mary and Martha,
one month after the Passover.*

I AM much grieved, my dearest father, at the delays which have kept you so long from Jerusalem; but I trust that ere many days the caravan for which you wait will reach Gaza, and that you will be able to resume your journey to the Holy City. I am now at Bethany, where I have been sojourning for some time; for such was the enmity of the Jews, incited by the chief priests, against us the disciples of

Jesus, that, by Pilate's command, we were compelled to leave Jerusalem on the day of the resurrection, to remain away until their hatred had in some degree subsided ; for he said that the continual presence there of the disciples of Jesus kept up constant occasion for tumult and disturbance.

My uncle Amos has retired for the present to his farm near Jericho, but will be here to-morrow to abide with us. Therefore, when you come near to Jerusalem, instead of going directly into the city, turn aside by the road leading past the king's gardens, and go up by the Brook Kedron into the way to Bethany. I pray that God may preserve you in safety, and soon grant me the happiness of once more embracing you, after three long years of separation.

And what marvellous things have been done, to which I have been a witness, in these three years !—from the preaching of John the Baptist, and the baptism of Jesus by him, unto the glorious resurrection of the mighty Son of God ! Favoured indeed have I been in that I was a dweller in Judea during this wondrous time, and have seen and heard these things, which no other age of the world can equal ! But so far as one could know them who was not an eye-witness, you, my dear father, have been faithfully informed of them through my letters. You have, therefore, before you the same testimony that I have, and which those possess who have seen and now believe. Once more, my dear father, read carefully the whole history, from the first letter, and thus pondering diligently all these things, answer to yourself this question—

Is not this man the Son of God ? Is not He the very Christ, the divine and long-looked-for Messiah ? Is He not that mighty Prophet which should come into the world ? If not, who is He ? Who is He at whose birth the air was filled with angels, and over whose cradle hovered a celestial star ?—before whose infant feet the three wisest men of the world—Shapha of Egypt, the Son of Ham, Beltazar of Assyria, the

son of Shem, and Thoropha of Grecia, the son of Japhet, representing the family of mankind—bowed in adoration and worship, as unto God? Who is He whom Herod the First so feared that he slew three hundred and twoscore children in Bethlehem to reach His life? Who is He whom John the Baptist proclaimed the “Lamb of God,” whose blood was the only fountain for sin? Who is He at whose baptism the heavens were opened above His head, and upon whom the Spirit of God descended in the form of a dove of light, while the voice of the Lord proclaimed from the depths of the cloudless skies, “This is my beloved Son”? Who is He, my dear father, at whose word the tempest became still, the angry waves were calmed, and the winds hushed? Who is He that healed the sick and leprous by a word—who restored a lost arm or leg by a touch—who by a look made whole the lifeless limb of the paralytic—who raised the daughter of Jairus—healed the centurion’s servant—restored to life the son of the widow of Nain—cast out a legion of devils from Beor the Levite—restored the deaf and dumb nephew of the Governor of Syria to hearing and speech—and gave to His disciples also the same power to do miracles;—who fed at one time four thousand men, and at another time five thousand, with a few pounds of bread and a few fishes, which a lad could carry in a basket;—to hold communion with whom Moses and Elias came from the regions of the blessed, shining in resplendent glory, bright from the presence of the Father;—who called forth Lazarus from the tomb of corruption to life and health;—who once, while praying, was answered by a voice from heaven in the hearing of many people, “I have glorified my name, and will glorify it again”?

Who was He, my father, against whom at His trial nothing could be found, and who, when delivered over to death by Pilate to save himself and appease the Jews, was publicly declared to be an innocent man by the act of the Procurator in calling for water and washing his hands, and saying that

he was clear of the prisoner's blood, for he found no fault in Him? Who was He at whose crucifixion the heavens grew black as sackcloth, the sun withdrew its light, the stars shot from their spheres, the lightnings leaped along the earth, the earth itself quaked, and the dead sprang from their graves? Who was He who on the third day burst the bars of the tomb;—received, as He walked forth, the worship of an archangel;—whose servants were a seraph and cherub;—who appeared alive to His mother, to the women of Galilee, to Mary of Bethany, to Martha and Lazarus, and last of all to me? Who is this wonderful man, my father? who is He but the Christ? Oh! read, ponder, and compare the prophets that speak of Messias with the life, and words, and deeds of Jesus, and the life of Jesus with the prophets. There thou wilt see that He has proved Himself the very Christ by the death which we in our ignorance looked upon as the sign of an impostor. Isaias prophesied of the Christ, whom he saw afar off, that He should be “a man of sorrows;” that He should be “despised and rejected of men;” that He should be “brought as a lamb to the slaughter;” that He should be “taken from prison and judgment, and cut off from the land of the living;” that He should be “numbered with the wicked in His death, and make His grave with the rich.” How light, how clear, how plain all these prophecies now are to me and to us all! How wonderfully to the very letter they have been fulfilled you already know.

His resurrection also was foretold by Himself, but we did not understand His words until now. When He spoke of destroying the Temple and raising it in three days, He spoke of the tabernacle of His body. Oh, how many sayings, which when spoken by His sacred lips we understood not, now rush upon us in all their meaning, proving to us that every step of His life was foreknown to Him—that He went forward to His death certain of all things whatsoever that were going to befall Him †

But His resurrection was also foretold by the holy David, when he said, "Thou wilt not leave His soul in hell, nor suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption;" and "therefore my flesh shall rest in hope." Even His arraignment before Pilate, Caiaphas, and Herod was foretold by David, when he said, "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against His Anointed;" yet the Lord saith, "Thou art my Son; this day I have begotten Thee." Also, my dear father, turn to the Psalms of King David, and compare the following words, which speak of Messiah, with what I have described in my previous letters: "My God, my God! why hast Thou forsaken me?" These are prophetic words, put into the mouth of Messiah when He shall come and be forsaken of God. You will find that in my letters I have told you that on the cross Jesus uttered these very words.

Again, King David makes Messiah, a few sentences further on, to say, "They shoot out the lip at me; they shake the head; they laugh me to scorn. They say, He trusted in the Lord that He would deliver Him. Thou hast brought me into the dust of death."

All this shows that Messiah, if He was to be a king, was also to suffer, to be forsaken of God, to be brought to death; and yet we rejected Jesus so soon as He died! But, my dear father, read the same Psalm of the holy king a little further, and you will see these words, which were put by the royal prophet into the lips of his future Messiah: "The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me. They pierced my hands and my feet. They part my garments among them, and upon my vesture cast lots."

Read and compare these acknowledged prophecies concerning Messiah with the accounts in my letters, dear father, and you will not only be convinced that Jesus is the Messiah of the prophets and Christ of God, but you will perceive that His humiliation and suffering before Pilate and Caiaphas,

His agony on the cross, His death and burial, instead, as we ignorantly conceived, of being evidences that He was not the Christ, are proofs that He was the very Son of the Highest—the Shiloh of Jehovah foretold by the prophets—the Anointed King of Israel.

Oh, how wonderful is all this! How marvellous these things that have come to pass before our eyes! Yet how have we been blinded, how gross and dark were our minds, that we could not, until He died and has risen again, see in Him all that He was in His sufferings and in His death—the divine Messiah. Now all is dazzlingly clear. The prophets are unveiled to our sight, and we see that these things were to happen to Him. Yet how quickly was He deserted, and how soon we lost our faith in Him! How His disciples denied they ever knew Him, and how we all were ashamed that we had ever followed Him! Oh, our darkness, our blindness, to have seen prophecies of Messiah only in the passages which speak of His glory and power, and passed by those which as positively foretold of His humiliation, degradation, and death! Read the prophets no longer with a veil before your eyes, my dearest father. See in all you read Jesus as the end of the prophets, the goal of all their prophecies, the veritable and sure fulfilment of their prophetic visions.

But you have said in one of your late letters to me that “Elias must first come, ere Messiah appear on earth;” and then you ask me, “Where is Elias? Hath he come? Who hath seen him?”

This question, my dear father, was also put by some of the Jews to Jesus. He replied—

“Elias truly has come, and ye knew him not, and ye have done unto him whatsoever ye listed.”

“Who was he?” demanded several of the scribes and priests, surprised at hearing this.

“He who came crying in the wilderness before me, and who spake of me, and whom Herod hath slain,” He answered.

"But his name was John, master," said they.

"His spirit and power were those of Elias," answered Jesus. "In Elijah's spirit and power he came, and thus was called the Elias that should come. The reality is the man. John was the Elias of Malachi the prophet."

Thus, my dear father, hath Jesus in all things proved Himself to be the subject of all prophecy—the King of Israel. But you will now ask, "Is He to re-establish the throne of David, and live for ever?"

Yes, verily, but not in Jerusalem on earth. Oh, how clear are all things now to my heart! His kingdom, which I once believed to be the land of Judah, is to be in a world beyond the skies, which He has created for His followers, and to which they are to pass, like Himself, through the gates of death. The Jerusalem in which His throne is to be placed is heavenly, and the true Jerusalem, of which the present one is but the type—what the body of a man is to the soul.

Jesus has talked with me since His resurrection, and made all this clear to me, and much more that is wonderful and full of joy. It is now four weeks since He arose, and during that time He has been seen not only by all the disciples, but by hundreds of His followers. The seventh day after His resurrection He appeared openly at Nazareth, and on the sea-shore to Peter, John, Andrew, James, and other disciples, to His numerous relatives, and to many of the chief citizens of His town, all of whom not only knew Him, but marvelled to behold His crucified hands. The effect of this meeting, which was witnessed by many who, being at the Passover, had seen Him crucified, was to bring the whole population worshipping to His feet. The only change in His usual appearance, dear father, to the eye, is a transparent paleness, which gives a soft radiance to His countenance, and a majestic reserve, which awes all who draw near to Him, so that men speak in His presence in whispers. His mother, happiest of women now, as she was before the most wretched, ever sits at His

feet, and silently rejoices in His sacred presence, seldom speaking, and looking up to Him rather as a worshipper beholding her God than a mother looking on her son. That He is in the flesh in reality, and not a spirit, He has proved to His disciples by eating with them; and in a remarkable way to a doubting disciple, called Thomas, who, not believing that Jesus had risen in His real body from the dead, was told by the divine Lord to place his fingers into His hands and into His side; which Thomas, convinced, with awe refused to do, but, falling at His feet in amazement and adoration, worshipped Him as God.

It would take much time, my dear father, to record the numerous instances in which the risen Lord has been seen and spoken with by many who knew Him before His crucifixion; so that there is no fact whereof many thousands in Judah are so fully assured as of this resurrection of Jesus from the dead.

And if fuller proof is wanted, Abram, the learned Pharisee, has been forced to confess to Rabbi Amos that it is to be found in the conduct of His disciples after their Master's crucifixion. For they began by denying Him and deserting Him; flying in all directions, and concealing the fact that they had been His followers. They were not only moved by fear to this concealment, but by shame, being sorely mortified at having been led away by Him; for they were honest, plain, sensible men, and not given to idle imaginings. They had become the followers of Jesus, because they saw in Him that moral purity and truth which were also present in their own characters. These plain, homely men—these poor fishermen and humble countrymen—felt deeply how the wise and prudent would now laugh them to scorn, and so they hastened to hide their disgrace and disappointment in the solitudes of the fishing hamlets of Galilee; and doubtless desired never more to hear spoken in their ears the name of their crucified Master.

But what do we behold, within a week after the resurrection is made known throughout the length and breadth of

Judah? Those men who had hidden themselves in dismay from the face of day came boldly forth, and once more were with their Lord, forgiven by Him, and received by Him into His holy keeping. They went with Him wherever He went, even to Jerusalem, from whence they had fled but a few days before. They walked everywhere with hasty steps and cheerful faces, no longer like men serving a defeated monarch, but like men whose master was Lord of heaven and of earth.

To-day they are with Him in the gardens of David, at Bethlehem, where He is holding daily a solemn council with the eleven, unfolding to them the future glory of His kingdom, and opening their hearts to the clear understanding of all that the prophets have written concerning Him. John, who is a member of this divine council, says that the power of Jesus, the greatness and majesty of His kingdom, the infinite results of His death and resurrection, are not to be conceived by those who have not listened to these mighty truths from His own lips.

"He hath shown us," said John, "how that His true office, as Son of God and Son of Man, is to be a mediator between both; that by His death He hath reconciled the race of Adam to His Father, having become our Lamb of sacrifice for the whole world. He showed us that He Himself was the High Priest, and His own precious body the victim, which He Himself offered up as a sacrifice to the wrath of Jehovah against transgressors, and how that the cross was the veritable altar of this world's great sacrifice, and its temple the whole earth and heavens. He showed us how that all the lambs since Adam's day typified Himself, the one only true and worthy Lamb, to be sacrificed for sins."

How wonderful, dear father, is all this! He further teaches His disciples that He will shortly ascend from the earth, to enter upon His heavenly kingdom, and that His subjects there are to be all who love Him and keep His commandments. It is to be a kingdom of holiness, and, none will

enter there but the pure in heart. He says further, that as we do now confess our sins over the blood of the victim we sacrifice for ourselves in the Temple, so henceforth we must look to Him (by faith when we shall see Him no longer), who was slain a sacrifice for us, and confess our sins to the Father for His blood's sake, which the Father hath accepted in the one sacrifice He made on the cross for us all. Jesus has moreover taught His disciples that the Gentiles are to share equally with the children of Abraham the benefits of His death and resurrection; that this good news shall be proclaimed to them by His disciples, and that they will gladly hear it and believe; that the gospel of redemption, no longer by the blood of bulls and of goats, but by *His* blood, shall in the progress of ages fill the whole earth, and that every knee shall bow to His name.

"The foundation of my everlasting kingdom," saith He, "truly shall be laid upon earth in the hearts of men; but the building is with God, eternal in the heavens. The tomb through which I have passed is its gate; and all who would come after me and enter in must follow in my footsteps."

Thomas then asked his Lord whither He would go, and the way; how He would leave the earth, since He could die no more.

"Thou shalt see for thyself ere many days are past," answered Jesus. "In that I have risen, all whom my Father giveth me shall rise also from the dead, and those whom I raise up I will take with me the way I go; for where I am they shall evermore be with me also."

This, dear father, is a brief account of what John has told us touching the divine teaching of Messiah, the Son of God, respecting His kingdom. Many things are still mysterious; but we know enough to be willing to trust ourselves to Him for this life and for that which is to come. We know that all power is given into His hands, and that He can save all men who believe, and who accept Him as the only sacrificed

Lamb which the Father hath accepted for the iniquities of men. The sacrifices of the Temple must henceforth cease.

It is a wondrous thing, dear father, that notwithstanding the Jews have heard how Jesus walks everywhere through Jewry, no efforts are made to lay hands on Him. At His presence crowds of His enemies fly like the stricken multitude before the advancing whirlwind. His presence in Judæa is a present dread, like some great evil, to those who hate Him, but like a heavenly blessing to more who love Him. Pilate, on the eve of setting forth on a journey last week to Bethel, before quitting the city, sent messengers in advance to learn whether Jesus the crucified was in the region whither he was going. Caiaphas, having occasion to go to Jericho a few days after the Passover, hearing that Jesus had been seen with His disciples on the road, made a circuit by Luz and Shiloh, that he might not meet Him. The gates of this city are kept constantly shut, lest He should enter therein; some of the chief priests fearing greatly to behold His face, while others believe that He is collecting an army, to advance upon and take Jerusalem from the Romans. And doubtless, dear father, were the kingdom of Jesus of this world, He would in a few days lead a countless host against the city, and make Himself master of Judæa. But His kingdom is in heaven; and all who dwell in the true Jerusalem must follow Him thither through sufferings, humiliation, and death.

I rejoice to see by your last letter that you may be expected to arrive here in two weeks. Oh that you were here now, that you might be taken by John to see Jesus! for from what he says He will not long remain visible among us. Whither He goeth or how He goeth away no man can say. We are filled with expectation of some great event which shall conclude the brilliant and wonderful succession of marvels that attend His footsteps and His presence on earth.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

LETTER XXXIX.

*Bethany, forty days after the
Resurrection.*

MY DEAR FATHER,

With a joy that nearly deprives me of the power to hold my pen, and with trembling fingers that make the words I write almost illegible, I make known to you the wondrous event which will mark this day for all time as most worthy to be noted among men.

In my last letter I informed you that Jesus, after His wonderful resurrection, which was declared to all men by infallible proofs, once more gathered His amazed and adoring disciples about Him, and taught them, with more than mortal wisdom and eloquence, the great truths appertaining to His kingdom, which He now appointed them to preach throughout all the world.

On the fortieth day, my dear father, early in the morning, He left the house of Mary and Lazarus, where He had sat watching with us all night (for none of us thought of sleep when we might listen to the sound of His heavenly voice), speaking to us of the glories of heaven, and the purity of heart and of life that must be possessed by all who should enter it.

"Lord," said Martha, as He went, "whither goest Thou?"

"Come and see," He answered. "Whither I go ye shall know, and the way ye shall know; for where I am ye shall also be, and all those who believe in me."

"Lord," said Mary, kneeling at His feet, "return at noon, and remain with us during the heat of the day."

"Mary," answered Jesus, "I am going to my Father's house. There thou shalt one day dwell with me in mansions not

made with hands. Follow me now, and thou shalt know the way thither. Through temptation I have first trodden it, through suffering, through death, and through resurrection from the dead. Thus also must thou and all who love me follow me. To my friends the gate of the tomb opens into the world of life eternal."

Thus speaking, He walked slowly forth towards the hill of Bethany, not far from the place where Lazarus was buried. He was followed not only by Mary, Martha, Lazarus, and John, my cousin Mary, and myself, each of us expecting, from His words and manner, that some new and great thing would come to pass, but by all the disciples, who had presently joined Him near the place of burial at the foot of the hill. There were at least five hundred persons in all moving on with Him ere he reached the green hill-side beyond the village; for all followed Him, expecting to hear more glorious tidings from His lips of the life beyond this.

"He goes to the hill to pray," said one of His disciples.

"Nay," said Peter; "He prays not since His resurrection as before. He hath no need of prayer for Himself, who hath conquered sin, Satan, death, the grave, and the world."

"He goeth to show us some mighty miracle, from the power and majesty that dwelleth in His face," said Thomas to me, gazing upon the Lord with awe; for each moment as He went His way up the hill, His countenance grew more glorious with a certain godlike majesty, and shone as the face of Moses descending from Mount Sinai. We all drew back with adoring fear, and alone He proceeded onward, a wide space being left between ourselves and Him. Yet there was no terror in the glory which surrounded and shone out from Him, but rather a sacred brightness, that seemed to be the very light of holiness and peace.

"Thus He appeared," said John to us, "when we beheld Him transfigured in the mount with Elias and Moses."

The hill, which was not lofty, was soon surmounted by our

Lord. He stood upon its summit alone. We kept back near the brow of the hill, fearing to approach Him, for His raiment now shone like the sun, while His countenance was as lightning. We shaded our eyes to behold Him. All was expectation and a looking for some mighty event—what it should be we knew not. John drew nearest to Him, and upon his knees, with clasped hands, looked towards Him earnestly; for he knew, as he afterwards told us, what would come to pass, Jesus having enlightened him the night before. Joyful tears were on his face as he gazed, with blinded eyes—as a man gazes at the noonday sun—upon his divine Master. It was a sight, dear father, impressive beyond expression. The hill was thronged with an expectant, awe-stricken multitude, who knew not whether to remain or fly from the glorious majesty of the presence of the Son of God. The blue sky spread out its mighty arch above the hills with but a single cloud. At the foot of the hill towards the Holy City lay the gardens of Gethsemane, where Jesus loved to walk, and where He was taken. Jerusalem, with its towers, pinnacles, palaces, and gorgeous Temple, glittered in the distance; and Calvary, studded with fresh Roman crosses, stood out to view in the clear air. The tall cypresses which grew above the tomb of Joseph, where He had lain, were also visible. Jesus seemed for a moment to survey these scenes of His suffering, of His ignominy and death, with a look of a divine conqueror. He then turned to His disciples, and said—

“Ye have been with me in my sorrows, and ye shall now behold my glory, and the reward which my Father doth give me. To-day I go from you, and ascend to my Father and to your Father. Remember all things which I have taught you concerning my kingdom. Go forth and teach the glad tidings of salvation to all men, and baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and, Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Thus speaking, in a voice that filled every heart with joy unutterable, He stretched forth His hands above their heads and blessed them, while we all fell down also, with our faces to the ground, to receive His blessing.

He then lifted up His eyes to the calm blue depths of heaven, and said in the same words He had spoken on the night of the Passover, and which John had told to me—

“And now, O Father, glorify Thou me with Thine own self—with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.”

As He spoke we raised our faces from the ground, and beheld Him rising from the earth, ascending from the hill-top into the air with a slow and majestic motion; His hands outspread over us who were beneath, as if shedding down blessings upon us all. The loud shout of wonder which rose from five hundred voices at seeing Him soar away into the sky was followed by a profound and awful silence as we watched Him rise and still rise, ascending and still ascending into the upper air, His whole form growing brighter and brighter as the distance widened between Him and the earth.

Upon our knees, speechless and marvelling, we followed His ascent with our amazed eyes, not a word being spoken by any among us, but our hearts might have been heard beating in the wonder of that moment.

Lo! in the far-off height of heaven we beheld suddenly appear a bright cloud no larger than a man's hand, but each instant it spread and grew broader and brighter, and, swift as the winged lightning, descended through the firmament, until we beheld it transformed into a glittering host of angels which no man could number, countless as the stars of heaven. As these shining legions descended, they parted into two bands, and, sweeping along the air, met the ascending Son of God in mid-sky. The rushing of their ten thousand times ten thousand wings was as the sound of many waters. Surrounding

Jesus like a shining cloud, they received Him into their midst, and hid Him from our eyes amid the glories of their heavenly splendour.

Now came to our ears the sounds of the angels' song, a sublimer strain than earth ever heard before. From the legions of seraphim and cherubim, encircling with their linked wings the Son of God, came, like the unearthly music heard in the dreams of night, these words, receding as they mounted upward with the Conqueror of death and hell —

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates ! and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of Glory shall come in !"

This song seemed to be answered from the inmost heavens, as if an archangel were standing at its portals, keeping watchful guard over the gate facing the earth.

"Who is the King of Glory ?"

"The Lord strong and mighty, even the Lord mighty in battle against principalities and powers,"

resounded from the ascending escort of Jesus in the loftiest strains of triumphant joy.

"Lift up your heads, O ye gates ! and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors ; and the King of Glory shall come in !"

Upon this we heard a mighty voice, as it were in heaven, together with the sound of a trumpet, and ten thousand voices about the throne of Jehovah seemed to say—

"God is coming up with a shout. He rideth, upon the heavens. He ascendeth on high. He hath led captivity captive, and received gifts for men. O, clap your hands, all ye people of earth ; shout His triumph, ye hosts of heaven.

"Fling wide your gates, O city of God. Be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, for the King of Glory enters in !"

Ascending and still ascending, receding and still receding, fainter and fainter came down to earth the angelic song ; and at length the brightest cloud of angels faded away into the upper heaven, the Son of God shining in their midst like a

central sun surrounded by a cloud of brightness, till finally like a star, they were seen a few moments longer, and then the heavens received Him out of our sight.

While we stood gazing up into the distant skies, hoping, expecting, yet doubting if we should ever behold Him again, two bright stars appeared, descending from the height of heaven towards us. Immediately we saw that they were angels. Alighting on the place Jesus had left, they said to the eleven—

"Why gaze ye up into heaven, ye men of Galilee? This same Jesus whom ye have seen go into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have now seen Him ascend."

Thus speaking, they vanished out of our sight.

This report of the ascent yesterday into heaven of the Christ, our blessed Lord Jesus, I wrote the same evening, while all that was done was present and vivid in my mind. Oh, what a glorious sight! What language can describe it? But one thing I have shown forth clearly to you, dear father, and that is the fact that Jesus has ascended into the heaven of heavens. Oh, wondrous thought! Overwhelming truth! What, oh what is earth? What is Judea? What is man, that God is mindful of him—that He should so have visited him? And when He has visited us—when His divine Son, the brightness of the glory of the Father, descended to earth and took upon Him our nature, to reconcile us to God and obtain for us eternal life, how has He been received? Shunned, for that He was poor—despised for His humble parentage—hated for his holiness—tried before tribunals for crimes unknown to Him—scourged and spit upon; mocked and buffeted, and crucified with thieves, as if His enemies would render His death as shameful as it could be made.

But behold the end. See, when He had paid the debt of death for us, what a change in all things! He awoke to life. He burst the tomb. He walked forth from the sepulchre. Angels ministered to Him. After forty days on earth, wherein

He unfolded to His disciples the mysteries of His gospel and the splendour of His kingdom, He ascended visibly to heaven at mid-day from Bethany, in the sight of many hundreds, and was led by armies of angels to the right hand of the Majesty on high.

This, my dear father, is the conclusion of the marvellous life of Jesus, both Lord and Christ. His ascent from this earth into the heaven of heavens is proof not only that He came from God, but that God is well pleased with all that He has done in the flesh. If in any one thing He taught He had spoken what was not true, either concerning the Father or concerning Himself, He would not thus have been welcomed back to the heavenly abodes. All that Jesus said of Himself is therefore true—Jehovah attests it! We must, then, believe, or we can have no interest in the kingdom which He hath gone to prepare for us, and which we can enter only as He hath travelled to it—through humiliation, suffering, death, the tomb, and the resurrection. Thus did He truly say, "The way I go ye shall know."

Therefore, my dear father, His kingdom is manifestly not of this world, as He said to Pilate the Procurator, but it is of heaven. To it He has triumphantly ascended, attended by legions of cherubim and seraphim: an ascent which David clearly foresaw in vision when he wrote, "God has gone up with a shout; He has ascended on high."

Doubt, then, no longer, dearest father. Jesus, the son of Mary in His human nature, was the SON OF GOD in His divine nature: an incomprehensible and mysterious Union, whereby He hath brought together in harmony the two natures sundered by sin, by sacrificing His own body as a sin-offering, to reconcile both in one immaculate body upon the cross. There is now no more condemnation to those who believe in Him and accept Him, for in His body He took our sins, and His precious blood, as that of a lamb without blemish, hath cleansed them for ever.

But I cannot write all I would say to you, dearest father. When we meet at Jerusalem on the first day of the week—which meeting I rejoicingly look for—I will unfold to you all that the divine and glorified Jesus hath taught me. Doubt not that He is Messiah; hesitate not to accept Him, for in Him is the fulfilment of Moses, and of the law, and of the prophets. He is the very Shiloh who should come and restore all things—unto whom be glory, power, dominion, majesty, and excellency evermore.

Your loving daughter,

ADINA.

THE END.